

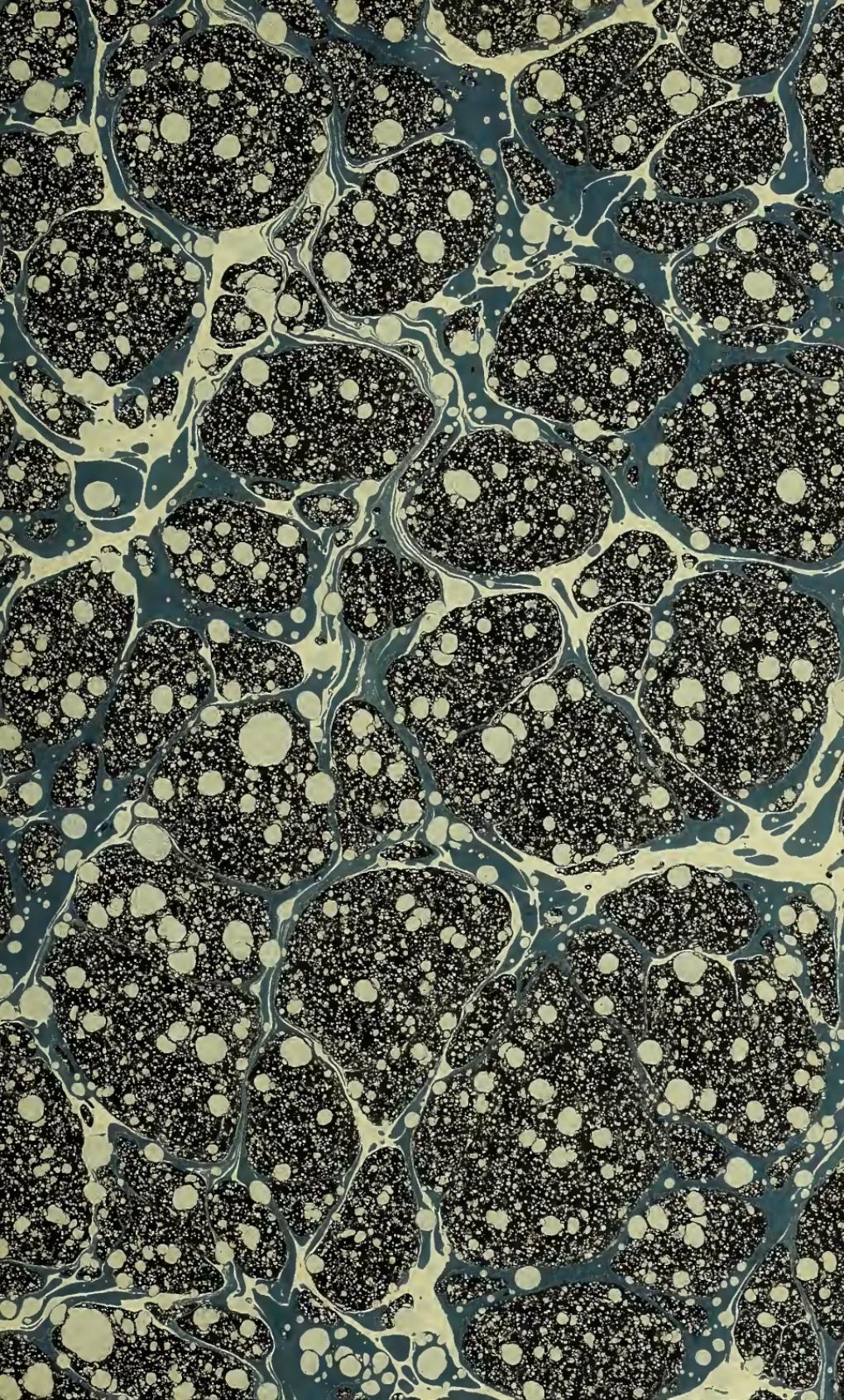




*George Washington Flowers*  
Memorial Collection

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

ESTABLISHED BY THE  
FAMILY OF  
COLONEL FLOWERS





not 10  
Pounds

Mr. Martin

$27^{\circ} 2$

Biology



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/recollectionsofj00fish>

# Recollections of Joshua Francis Fisher







*J. Francis Fisher, Esq<sup>ee</sup>.*

Recollections of  
JOSHUA FRANCIS FISHER  
Written in 1864



Arranged by Sophia Cadwalader

Privately Printed  
1929

COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY SOPHIA H. CADWALADER

[ FIFTY COPIES PRINTED ]

D. B. UPDIKE, THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON

## Contents

FOREWORD	vii
I. THE FISHER FAMILY	1
II. THE WILLING FAMILY	35
III. MEMOIR OF TENCH FRANCIS THE YOUNGER	125
IV. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA	167
V. FAMILY FRIENDS	175

570113



## Foreword

*Joshua Francis Fisher was the son of Joshua Fisher and Elizabeth Powel Francis, his wife. He was born in Philadelphia, on February 17th, 1807, at the house of his grandmother Francis, about three months after the death of his father.*

*His mother, Mrs Joshua Fisher, had never been congenial to her husband's family. In fact they were much annoyed by the marriage of the eldest son "out of meeting"; and the subsequent behaviour of all concerned was not calculated to remove ill-feeling.*

*Joshua Fisher, when he married in 1806, was in easy circumstances, living, before his marriage, at the place his Father had built outside of Philadelphia on part of the Logan property, and known to this day as Wakefield. This house Joshua Fisher had furnished and, we presume, he had intended to live there with his wife.*

*His sudden death in the autumn following his marriage came at an unfortunate time financially. His father, Thomas Fisher, was in feeble health, and his uncles, Samuel Rowland Fisher and Miers Fisher, had never liked or approved of his marriage and had no idea of making things easy for his widow. She found herself with such very limited means, that she was obliged to go back to her mother's house to live, her father, Tench Francis having died the previous year. There her child was born and there she remained until her mother's death, five years later, when her affairs were sufficiently straightened out to permit her to have a house of her own.*

## Foreword

*Her elder sister's husband, Mr George Harrison, was one of the executors of Joshua Fisher, and guardian of his son; he looked after him in every way and having no children of their own, Mr & Mrs Harrison practically adopted him. He grew up, naturally with deep affection for his mother and aunt and uncle, and with great prejudice and distrust of his father's family who had never done anything for him, and had neglected and grieved those to whom he was passionately attached.*

*He went to school in Philadelphia, and was sent by Mr Harrison to Harvard College. He also went abroad as a young man, and was Attaché to the American Legation in Paris when Mr William C. Rives was Minister to France. He had many Francis cousins in Rhode Island, and on one of his visits to them, met Miss Eliza Middleton, who later became his wife. She was the youngest child of Henry Middleton, who had been Governor of South Carolina, and American Minister to Russia from 1820 to 1830—the longest period for which anyone has ever held that office. Henry Middleton owned the Stone House, in Newport, Rhode Island, which is still standing. In those days the entrance was from the Bath Road, the present Bellevue Avenue not existing; and the kitchen garden, dairies, etc., were where the present Casino and grounds are now. Many of the rich Southern planters had homes and properties in Newport, which was accessible by sea; land journeys in the old days being quite difficult. The young couple were married in March, 1837, at Middleton Place, her father's estate on the Ashley River near Charleston.*

## Foreword

*Joshua Francis Fisher brought his wife to Philadelphia, to live with his mother, to be a daughter to her and also to his aunt and uncle. They had seven children, of whom one, the eldest little boy, died as an infant, to their great distress. Mr Fisher bought a place in the country in what was then Abington, to give his wife a home of her own, for part of the year. As the family increased, and after the death of his uncle and aunt Harrison, he bought more land, neighbouring farms, and on one of these built Alverthorpe, named after an old family place in England. At the time of his death, he owned about seven hundred and fifty acres.*

*My grandfather was a man of rare cultivation and literary taste. A member of the American Philosophical Society and one of the Founders of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and later a Vice-President, he contributed many papers to its Proceedings. His knowledge of Colonial History and especially his study of the life of William Penn has been a help to subsequent workers in that field. His interests covered a wide field. When abroad as a young man he was commissioned by Mr Roberts Vaux to investigate the training of the blind in Europe. On his return his information was made use of and he became actively connected with the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. An interest which continued as long as he lived, having been its President for many years at the time of his death. Everything prospered till the time of the Civil War. His wife, of course, was intensely Southern in all her feelings, he himself took the legal point of view as to the right of Secession; and the way the war*

## Foreword

*was conducted, the indignities offered to Southerners or Southern sympathisers, increased all their feelings ten-fold. On the other hand, the daughters just growing up had very strong sentiments for the young men of their acquaintance going off to join the Northern Army, and so, much family distress ensued.*

*In 1864, the close of the Civil War found Joshua Francis Fisher, a man prematurely old and disheartened by the events he had just lived through. Naturally of a nervous temperament and strongly prejudiced, the stress and strain of the war years had been very hard on him.*

*These recollections he jotted down, evidently from time to time, sometimes repeating himself, with the probable intention of going over them. It has seemed worth while to try to put them together in such shape that his descendants, and the descendants of those of whom he writes, can have something to give a picture of the early days of Philadelphia.*

*He died in 1873 and his wife in 1890, and now, nearly forty years after, I, his granddaughter, have tried to piece this together.*

*It should be added that these recollections are printed, not from the original MS., but from copies of it, which are not consistent with each other. The capitalization and punctuation are sometimes peculiar and lack uniformity. I have thought it best, however, in general to follow the punctuation, capitalization, and, in some cases, the spelling, as given in these copies, without attempting a con-*

## Foreword

*sistency which was not regarded as so important at the time the notes were written as it is today.*

SOPHIA CADWALADER

*York Harbour, Maine,*

*1928*



I  
The Fisher Family



## The Fisher Family

ON the twenty-eighth day of April, 1864, I take my pen to begin a long projected Work. The Record of my Recollections of family traditions, & of the most interesting incidents of my own life, as well as of such notices of contemporary notabilities & events as may add importance to what I intend to make a family history for the use of my children.

I have taken great pains to inquire of my aged friends now long gone, about their contemporaries & those who preceded them, & I do not believe that there ever was a worthier race of people than our progenitors & their kins-folk for two hundred years past. Of this at least, we may be proud, & if the Revolution which we are now passing through shall leave us no other inheritance, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that through all our Provincial History—through all the period when our Great Republic was happy at home and respected abroad—our family, by their private virtues & social position, ranked with the best people of our Country & enjoyed the friendship & respect of the most eminent and honoured of their fellow-citizens.

These reminiscences, with other *collectiana* of family history, which I trust I shall be able to complete, will not, I believe, be undervalued by my children. A great deal is trifling gossip, such as an old man details by his chimney-side, “entre deux lumières,” to his children & grandchildren,—none others would feel an interest in it—but it will, if completed, at least serve as a private memorial of what their fore-fathers have been, &c of what was the state of society in my native city, when my family, in its different branches filled honourable places in it.

## Recollections

All is now passing away, & soon few will be left to tell what Philadelphia was before the Revolution, and in the early days of the Republic. Our fortunes too are sensibly waning. When rapidly acquired wealth undignified by honest toil in its acquirement, unembellished by education or taste, shall outblaze us “*de la vieille roche*,” it will be something to know we had honest & honourable progenitors, the friends and associates of the good men who founded our institutions, & gave an example of public & private virtues, which, it is much to be feared, are now held in contempt as obstructing, not aiding, the road to power & fortune. I can myself hardly believe I am still a citizen of my native land—so entirely are ancient principles ignored.

MY ancestors of the name of Fisher emigrated from Yorkshire in the year 1681. John Fisher is supposed to be identified with one of his name in the East Riding of the County, who suffered by fine & imprisonment for his religious Faith, in the year 1678, as recorded in the history of the Quakers. His position or origin is not known. It is possible that he may have been of the family of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who was born at Beverly in the same division of the County. If we could prove this, it would be a matter of pride, for he lost his life for conscience-sake, under that licentious Tyrant, Henry VIII, whose supremacy he would not acknowledge, & no one of the martyrs of the Romish Church was more worthy of a place in her catalogue of saints. Whatever the origin of John Fisher, he was apparently a person of substance, & he became on his arrival on our shores, the Proprietor of several lots in our City, & Lands beyond its limits, as early recorded Deeds exhibit.

## The Fisher Family

He brought with him his Wife, Margaret, & their son, Thomas, born in England in 1669, and then twelve years old. A tradition that they arrived so late in the autumn of 1681 as to be unable to procure or construct a house, & that they passed the Winter in a cave, on the Banks of the Delaware, seems to be confirmed by a deed conveying a lot on the River Front containing a Cave. He is supposed afterwards to have built and inhabited a two-story brick house on the north side of Walnut Street below Second Street, which was standing within my recollection & was the property of my Father's Sister, Mrs Hannah Logan Smith. An humble abode, about the size of what is called William Penn's Cottage, the Letitia Court house, but so long occupied as a workshop that its original features or arrangements could hardly be traced.

I know little of John Fisher after his arrival. He is second on the list of the second Grand Jury—the very one which presented Margaret Mattson as a witch; but as a majority of the panel seem to have been Swedes & illiterate persons, we need not consider him as a sharer in the superstition of the day. A curious paper, however, has been preserved and is in my possession, being an act of the members of this Jury, subscribed by Patrick Robinson, as Foreman, & by John Fisher, the second on the list, in a good bold hand, protesting against some indignity put upon them by the Court, & demanding redress or apology, under threat of calling them to an account before their superiors. We have no trace of the cause of grievance, or the result of the remonstrance. We may suppose that my ancestor was an active mover in this extraordinary act; for we have additional evidence of his boldness in asserting what he believed to be his rights. Another document has

## Recollections

been saved from the same source, which is in fact an indictment for treasonable words spoken in denial of the authority of the Proprietor. Whether the Prosecution in this instance led to trial & punishment, we are also unable to discover, for all the records of the Court were destroyed.

Nor does this seem to have been his only quarrel with the Judicial Authorities; for I find endorsed upon the slip of a Verdict taken in the sixth Court held in Philadelphia, a rough memorandum, probably by the clerk, that "a Mittimus be drawn to commit John Fisher to the Sheriff's custody for affronting the Court." Whether this was a new offense or one that grew out of the matter above noted, can never be ascertained; all these papers having been picked by me out of a mass of manuscript Court files, which were in the lofts at The Woodlands, when that establishment was broken up. They were selected by me as curiosities, without the knowledge that John Fisher was my ancestor, or any appreciation of the value of the collection, which I left to be destroyed. Whether his contemporaries condemned him as a wrong-headed, troublesome fellow, or admired his manly vindication of public Liberty and private Conscience, we may at least find some indication of the Wilfulness of Action & independence of thought, which have been rather characteristic of his descendants to the present day.

He died in Philadelphia between July 1685, and April 1686, leaving a widow, Margaret, & several children, all of them, I believe, born in England.

I have examined the records of Friends Meeting, which are transcribed & carefully preserved at Devonshire House, City, but without finding any minute of his Marriage or the maiden name of his wife. The Family Records of Wake-

## The Fisher Family

field give the names of their children, Thomas, John, James, Ann, Alice, and Sarah.

Thomas Fisher was married to Margery Maude in 1693. Her Father was Joshua Maude, son of John Maude of Alverthorpe Hall near Leeds, of a younger branch of the family of Lord Hawarden, still existing in Yorkshire, no longer owning the estate of Alverthorpe, but represented by the Maudes of West Riddlesden, people of some wealth & importance. Joshua Maude had married Elizabeth Parr, whose Mother was the wife of the Reverend Thomas Parr, a dispossessed Calvinist Clergyman, & the Sister of John Bradshaw, Speaker of the High Court of Commission, which tried Charles I.

The estate of Alverthorpe came by marriage into possession of one of the Lowthers, a family ennobled by the name of Lonsdale, and is still owned by a Baron of that name and race.

Whether this connection should be a subject of boast or of shame, will depend on the opinions of my readers; but if, as has been said, John Bradshaw was a cousin of John Milton, it may be a matter of pride to be connected even distantly with that glorious Poet. Joshua Maude died in England, leaving a Widow & two daughters, Margery & Jane.\* The Widow subsequently married a Welsh gentleman, Doctor Thomas Wynne, of Caerwys, County of Flint, North Wales, and with him emigrated to America in the year 1682, arriving on the ship "Submission" in Chesapeake Bay.

\* A son, Joshua, remained in England, & from him are descended, Daniel Maude of Sunderland, Timothy Maude and William Maude near Bradford, Abigail Maude wife of Abraham Darcy of Colebrookdale, and the wives of Richard Reynolds, and William Rathbone, of Liverpool, all, or most of whom were alive when my great-uncle Jabez Fisher visited England, & received him most kindly as a relative.

## Recollections

Her Husband, Thomas Wynne afterwards filled some posts of importance under the Proprietary Governor of Pennsylvania; his wife made purchase of a considerable Estate, in the county of Sussex, Delaware, & on the marriage of her daughter Margery to Thomas Fisher, settled on them a large farm on the Whork-hills near Lewes-town, which remained for many generations in the family.

This induced Thomas Fisher to remove to Delaware, where he remained till his death. We know little or nothing of him, but the fact that he represented the County of Sussex in the Legislature held in Philadelphia in 1696, & in 1700, & afterwards in the separate Assemblies held at Newcastle for the lower Counties in 1704 and 1708;\* that he held the Commission of Justice of the Peace in 1704, when Justices were selected for their high character & position, and had charge of the Proprietary interests under James Logan as late as 1712 and 1713. A letter of that date informs us, he first engaged the services of the distinguished lawyer, Andrew Hamilton, then residing at Chester-town, to prosecute Berckley Codd, Esq., who disputed the Quit Rents, or some other of the Proprietary Rights.

The manuscript records at Wakefield inform us that Thomas and Margery Fisher had eight children:— Joshua, Jabez, Maud, James, Esther married to Abraham

\* The Legislature of 1708 for the lower Counties, was composed of seventeen members; they quarrelled with Governor Evans, whose conduct they found unreasonable & arbitrary, and eight representatives, of whom Thomas Fisher appears to have been the head and leader, seceded, to use the words of their declaration, “being desirous to keep ourselves clear of everything which may hurt our establishment, or disturb the peace we enjoy, think fit to return to our habitations.” and thus, as there was no Sergeant-at-arms to bring them back, dissolved the Assembly.

## The Fisher Family

Wyncoop, Margery married to James Myers, Elizabeth married to Daniel Eyre, and Margaret married to David Booth.

As Joshua was born in 1707, he was probably not the eldest son. James Fisher left children from whom are descended many of the Fishers of the lower Counties; leading men in their small sphere, & through intermarriage, connected with the Rodneys, the Vinings and other honourable families in Delaware & Maryland. The sisters also left descendants. Some of the name of Fisher went to Virginia, & have left descendants who have taken active part in public affairs.

For all these distant relations, I must refer to an elaborate family tree, prepared by the late Thomas Gilpin, of which there are several copies: Joshua Fisher married Sarah Rowland, daughter of Samuel Rowland at Friends' Meeting, in Pilot-town, Sussex County, Del. on the 27th. of 7th month, 1733.

What was the early career of my Great-Grandfather, I have not ascertained. He certainly inherited some portion of his Mother's property, which he sold on his removal to Philadelphia in 1746. It is not unlikely that he had been early attracted to maritime Adventure, as his inducement to change his residence was to enter into commercial life. His survey and map of Delaware Bay, which was printed in 1756, was considered authoritative to the end of the century and exhibited considerable practical knowledge of Marine Surveying. It is said that it was made in 1730, & that he, for the first time used the Quadrant, which he procured from its inventor, Thomas Godfrey. It was in fact only superseded by the map of the United States Coast Survey made a century later.

## Recollections

In those days of small fortunes and long voyages, the lesser merchants generally accompanied their own ventures, and were often at the same time, Owners and Captains of their ships. Thus it is possible that he opened his connections with the English merchants of London & Bristol, by personal visits. Whether it were so or not, he established a prosperous commercial house, the largest in Philadelphia, in correspondence with England long before the Revolutionary War, & the firm of Joshua Fisher and Sons, was, if not the first, certainly the first of the Society of Friends.

Beside his skill in nautical surveying, he is supposed to have had some opportunity to acquaint himself with elegant letters; having in early life acquired the friendship of Mr Henry Brooke, an accomplished English gentleman, settled in the County of Sussex, & holding some office in the Customs, under the British Crown. He was a scholar and a poet, and had what was called in those days, a fine library, to the use of which my Ancestor was most kindly admitted.

Of the latter I have only one letter; it is in a good hand and style; and if, as is supposed, he was the author of the Non-Importation Agreement, of which the original is in his hand-writing, he had some power of composition.

His grandson, Joshua Gilpin, who was old enough to recollect him and of course had heard much of him, writes that he was rather remarkable in his day for his attainments in mathematics, & in his old age found pleasure in teaching him, his eldest grandson, the rudiments of the science. He describes him as a well-read man, agreeable in conversation, & a good writer. He says he was tall & thin, with an aquiline nose & fair complexion. His stature he has not

## The Fisher Family

transmitted to his descendants, who in general have not exceeded the middle height.

He lived through the Revolutionary War, & although taking his side with his fellow-citizens in their opposition to the encroachments of Parliament on Magna Charta rights, he was, with most of the Society of Friends, opposed to armed resistance, & was in consequence classed among the Tories. The Revolutionary Authorities, chiefly Presbyterians, the bitter political & religious enemies of his sect, preferred charges of disloyalty against most of the leading Quakers, &, although the accusation was based on a forgery, which was quite manifest, & which, if true could not have brought them under the charge, he, with his sons & about twenty of the most eminent members of the Meeting were ordered into banishment. The writ of Habeas Corpus, was applied for, and granted by that honourable & fearless Judge, Thomas McKean; but the Legislature, in a spirit akin to that prevailing in the Congress of the present day, suspended the writ by Re-troactive action. The National Congress would not hear an Appeal, & the helpless prisoners were sent to Virginia, to remain for nearly a year in exile, dependent on their own means for support. Joshua Fisher, on account of his great age & infirmities, was exempted from the penalty, & lived long enough to welcome back his sons and friends. He died on the 31st of January, 1783, at his residence on the west side of Second Street below Walnut, which he had built in 1753. It was reckoned one of the best houses in town of that day, and was afterwards the residence of his son, Samuel Rowland Fisher, till the death of the latter in 1834, & at one time, that of his son Thomas Fisher; but is now, I believe, demolished. He survived his wife, Sarah Row-

## Recollections

land, eleven years. Her death which occurred on January 5th, 1772, is thus noticed in the "Pennsylvania Packet"—"On Sunday, the 5th. Instant, departed this life, Mrs Fisher, the amiable and virtuous consort of Mr Joshua Fisher, merchant; and on Wednesday last, her remains were interred in the Friends' Burying Place, attended by a great number of respectable inhabitants." Nothing else concerning her has come down to me by private tradition. She was the daughter of Thomas & Sarah Rowland.\* The latter was the daughter of John Myers & Mary Haworth, who came from England in 1682, with Dr Thomas Wynne & Margery Maude.

When Joshua Fisher resided in Delaware he held, as was usual among all his neighbours, a certain number of slaves. On his removal to Philadelphia, he carried with him his household servants, the number of whom is not mentioned, and sold five agricultural labourers, for whom he had no further use; but afterwards from conversation with John Woolman, a celebrated English Preacher & one of the earliest advocates of Abolition, who was a guest at his house, he became convinced of the inconsistency of

\* After the death of Thomas Rowland, his widow married successively four husbands. John Osborn, Samuel Blundell, Enoch Cummins, & Joshua Clayton! My record says that during her several widowhoods she was an efficient manager of her own family & estates, was very active and afforded great services from her attention and kindness. She was always an honoured member of the Society of Friends; at eighteen years of age, she was appointed Clerk of the Women's Southern Quarterly Meeting. It is not improbable that she was of the few women Friends in this secluded Meeting who could write. The schoolmaster was not much abroad in those days. Her grand-daughter, Sarah Turner, a descendant of Samuel Blundell, her third husband, to whom she was well known, writes that she found "Sarah Clayton in the Meeting Records to be appointed in 1756, at about her 80th year, to be a representative to Little Creek Meeting, & that she was reputed to be of the excellent of the earth"!

## The Fisher Family

slavery with Christian principles, & immediately liberated all he then held. Still uneasy in his mind at having sold the rest into bondage, he resolved to purchase those living & manumit them; as more than twenty years had elapsed, & some of his former slaves had offspring, he determined to liberate these also, at his own cost; which he accordingly did, bestowing on eight of them, the doubtful blessing of freedom, & only retaining one, who was too old to support himself by his labour, and who, it is said, remained a pensioner in the family to the advanced age of 116 years! The memoranda of all the details were found by his grandson many years after, from which it appeared he had satisfied his conscience at an outlay of nearly 3,000 pounds!

This transaction was completed a short time before our magniloquent proclamation of Independence declared, in the words of its author, who remained a slave-holder till his death, "that all men are born free and equal"!

Joshua Fisher made no boast of his philanthropy. He reproached no one who did not adopt his convictions, & the memory of this liberal & conscientious act would have been lost to his descendants of the present generation, but for the accidental preservation and discovery of a little file of papers containing the accounts and his correspondence with his old friends and neighbours in Sussex County, in his search for his former servants & their children.

We may be pardoned if we place this truly conscientious act, against his refusal to contribute to the War of Independence, directly or indirectly, even by the sale of goods for the army, or receiving the paper currency; which refusal, it is to be observed, was upon its first issue and *before* its depreciation. We must admit his conscientiousness, if we condemn his want of loyalty.

## Recollections

I quote the following passages from a manuscript memoir of the Fisher family by my Father's cousin, Mr Thomas Gilpin.

"The members of the Fisher family were among those who suffered most considerably during the War, as their business had been much extended. . . . The requisitions necessary for the American Army became urgent, & it was known that in their warehouses goods were stored, which were serviceable during a time of such great scarcity, they were forcibly taken possession of by order of the commanding Officers of the Army, & sent either to the public stores for the equipment of the ships of War, or to the stores of the Clothier General of the Army; but with no accountability to the owners of the property, as payment could not have been made but in the depreciated currency of the country."

The following extracts from Christopher Marshall's "Remembrances," show, however, that the original seizures were made by the Committee of Public Safety, a revolutionary organization assuming extra legal & dictatorial authority.

"*May 18th: 1776*—went to the Committee Room, at the Philosophical Hall—the call of the meeting was to consider a letter from Joshua Fisher & Sons, respecting a load of salt lodged in the Committee's store as being shipped contrary to Resolution of Congress in December, 1774—but as this letter now was a jesuitical contrivance to impose on the Country & deceive the Committee, a true state of the case was ordered to be published."

"*May 28th: met the Committee at the Philosophical Hall.* Joshua Fisher & Sons' letter to us respecting the salt, was now referred to Congress, for their determination.

## The Fisher Family

. . . A letter appointed to be written to the managers of the Hospital respecting Thomas Fisher being elected manager."

It thus seems that a conscientious Royalist was not permitted to act in an office of pure benevolence for the relief of the sick and maimed in our great Hospital!

The seizure of salt was probably the same referred to in Mr Gilpin's account taken from a memorandum of the firm, dated, 10th. Mo. 7th. 1782; Congress having ordered all trade with England to be stopped from the 1st of 12th. month, 1774, and the ship "Pennsylvania Packet" Captain Osborn, having arrived the 4th. of 12th. Mo: 1774, the Committee ordered the cargo to be put into store, & to be sold at auction.

It consisted, inter alia, of 4,000 bushels of salt, cordage, sail-cloth, & Irish linen, and cost in sterling £1355:16:3

From the same memoranda the following items are extracted:

Goods taken out of stores by order of General Washington for the use of the Army on the evacuation of Philadelphia on the 24th. of September, 1777, . . . value in sterling . . . £ 247: 3:6  
Goods taken out of stores by the order of General Benedict Arnold on the return of the Americans to Philadelphia 26th June, 1778, £1058:11:  
£2661:10:9

These by no means appear to have been the only seizures for from Marshall's "Remembrances," date of January 23rd. 1776, I take the following:

"Near six P.M. went to the Committee Room at the Philosophical Hall. It was there concluded to break the lock, which Joshua Fisher & Sons had put upon their store-

## Recollections

door, take out the goods and sell them at Public Vendue. The which I would not have the Committee of Safety do, but it was over-ruled."

The above, if not every instance of seizures of the goods of the Firm, are sufficient to show the violence, justifiable or otherwise, to which they were subjected. It is indeed possible that Continental money may have been offered, as we may infer from the following excerpt, also from Marshall:

"*January 31st. 1776.* At this meeting, Thomas & Samuel R. Fisher were sent for on a complaint of their refusing to take Continental money; to which complaint they made no objection; acknowledging the charge to be true; and said that for conscience' sake they could not take it in future; on which they were ordered to be censured in the Public Papers next week."

I have not looked into the newspapers to see if this penalty was inflicted, which, I suppose, was authorized by a recent Act of Congress, passed January 11th. 1776, ordaining that "Persons refusing to receive the Continental Bills of Credit in payment, or who should obstruct or discourage the currency or circulation thereof, should on conviction, be deemed, published and treated as enemies of the country & precluded from all trade or intercourse with the inhabitants of the Colonies."

To the same period may be referred the additional procedure of outlawry which we have on tradition: the windows of the Brothers' stores were nailed up, only to be opened on the occasion of the seizure of their goods for military purposes in the succeeding years. It is presumed that their stores remained closed during the occupation of the City by the British Troops, as the Brothers were then, luckily perhaps for them, in banishment, during the whole period.

## The Fisher Family

All that I can add, is my belief that the currency was refused as the price of blood, & their goods not furnished for military purposes from the same scruples. Nor did Joshua Fisher or my grandfather ever demand or receive any compensation for their losses. I have enlarged on this subject, because I shall have to refer to it in my account of my Father,

The losses of the firm are said to have been considerable, and the long suspension of their trade was an injury from which they never probably recovered. From the foundation of their Firm, they had been the correspondents of the principal Quaker houses in Great Britain. Among these, William Rathbone of Liverpool, and David Barclay of London; and they are said to have established the first line of Packets between Philadelphia and London.

Of this line were the "Britannia," Captain Peter Osborn, the "Pennsylvania Packet," Captain N. Falconer, and the ship "Hetty." A constant trade was entertained with England, and voyages to Spain were sometimes undertaken, & this was kept up till the difficulties arose which preceded the Revolution.

I must now proceed to sketch, from such materials as I possess an account of my Grandfather, Thomas Fisher, and his three brothers, Samuel, Miers & Jabez. Thomas Fisher on the re-establishment of peace was the head of his family and of his Firm. He seems to have been fully worthy of the respect and love which were bestowed on him by his family & the community in which he lived.

All who have spoken of him to me describe him as a kind-hearted gentleman, free from most, if not all, the narrow prejudices of his sect. His Father's example was before him as a guide. He had as good an education as the

## Recollections

schools of his day afforded. He had, too, the advantage derived from a somewhat prolonged visit to his mother-country, & an association with many enlightened people. He had seen something of France, having been captured on his way to Europe and taken to that country as a prisoner. He had what was perhaps still more an advantage, the experience & trials of Civil War, which are apt to strengthen & enlarge the mind, & if he preserved strong prejudices in favour of England & her institutions & customs, these may indicate a fear of untried Democratic institutions, and aspirations for social and intellectual enjoyments which his native land did not afford.

He was a handsome man, of easy manners, & very choice and even elegant in his attire. As such I recollect him. He was a liberal man too, taking part in many public charities. He was one of the founders of the West-town School, a manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital, & one of the original Members of the American Philosophical Society.

From the time of the Peace, his life was without much incident, and there is no story of it to tell.

He purchased the house on Second Street, below the Governor's (Edward Shippen) Mansion, which had belonged to Mrs Jekyll. In this he died. He built the house at Wakefield on part of his wife's inheritance, & had the good taste to preserve the noble forest trees which are now its pride.

His wife, whom he tenderly loved, died in 1796, and he survived her for fourteen years.

She was a cultivated woman, of cheerful nature, & her loss was the greater, because her eldest daughter, Hannah, adopted the narrowest ideas & strictest practices of Quakerism and was a preacher in her 'teens.

## The Fisher Family

As a member of Meeting, her Father could not prevent a course which saddened his household, and disgusted his eldest & favourite son, and drove him to a separate home.

My Grandmother was the granddaughter of James Logan. Her Father (William Logan) was a well-educated man, & the library at Stenton gave opportunity for the cultivation of a literary taste, which she did not neglect. Her manuscript extracts, diaries & reflections, which are preserved, prove this. Her correspondence with her husband, in his exile, gives a good impression of her character, but it is not interesting enough to quote. She remained in Philadelphia with her infant son, my Father, during the whole period of his absence, residing "in Second Street below the bridge" (meaning the bridge over Dock Creek).

The following advertisement of a reward for her own & her infant's dresses, which were stolen from her house, it was supposed by a British soldier, is curious, marking a style of dress which I should suppose rather unusual at any time, in the Society of Friends.

"STOLEN etc. the following articles: One white satin petticoat, quilted with flowers, one rich pearl-coloured satin gown lined with cream-coloured Persian, also several yards of the same cream-coloured satin; one white Mantua gown, one blossom-coloured satin cloak lined with white Mantua; a baby cloak of purple & yellow changeable Mantua, lined with white Mantua; a number of aprons & handkerchiefs of cambric muslin & holland, all marked S.L., several frocks, etc., belonging to a child: also a gold watch with a steel chain & crystal seals set in gold with engraved arms. Ten guineas reward are offered for the recovery of the same, or five guineas for the watch alone."

My dear Aunt Hetty Fisher, informed me these dresses

## Recollections

formed the principal part of the wedding trousseau. The child's frocks were my Father's of course, & none were ever recovered. My Aunt Hannah would not have prized such evidences of vanity and worldliness. Her later descendants would probably value more highly the seals with arms engraved; which, if those of the Logan family, might have settled a mooted point: (the book-plate arms in the volumes of the Loganian Library being clearly wrong), or if, of the Fishers' would probably only confirm the authority of the only seal of their's I have ever seen, of a date preceding the Revolution: being a large silver stamp seal with ebony handle, belonging to Joshua Fisher, the first of the name. Its bearing was a field *Or*—a King-fisher *proper*—beak erected *bendwise*—& the same bird as crest. This seal was in the possession of Mr Thomas Fisher, son of Samuel Rowland Fisher, and is now lost or mislaid.

I had it accurately copied by an engraver for my own seal—but there seems a fatality about the arms, for the first I had engraved, I lost in the woods at Alverthorpe—the second was picked from my pocket with my Breguet watch, and not recovered with the latter; & all I now have is a Fac-simile stamp seal taken by the electrotype.

My right to the arms is that of an American citizen to any he may assume, although there is some reason to presume that my great-grandfather, who had no aristocratic assumption, may have ascertained a better title to it, & it is my supposition that both the silver & the crystal seals were procured by my Grandfather Thomas Fisher when he was in England in 1767, & that he was able to give a better account of it than I can.

My Grandfather had many English notions about primogeniture and he was not only fond but proud of my

## The Fisher Family

father & had he lived, there would have been a different apportionment of his estate. As it was, I, his representative grandson, was provided for by the prospective value of *backlands*, the greater part of which, by good advice, I abandoned for the taxes after they had been paid during my minority, at my loss, & all the rest that I received may be estimated at something less than \$9,000.

The estate & mansion of Wakefield were left to my uncle William Logan Fisher, in the hands of whose descendants it is now worth more than a quarter of a million. I do not begrudge it to them; they are more worthy than the channel through which it descended to them, & are in no way responsible for the influences that worked upon the enfeebled mind of my good Grandfather to procure my disinheritance.

My Grandfather Fisher died when I was three years old; but I distinctly recollect him; a small man remarkably well dressed in a square coat, breeches with silver buckles, a shovel hat looped to button, with a tall malacca cane. I am told he was handsome & very gentlemanly; quite an Englishman in all his prejudices & tastes. He succeeded to the head of the Firm of Joshua Fisher & Sons, and was connected with the most respectable houses in England. He left what was called a good estate, probably \$150,000 of which I had a very small share indeed. It is supposed his will was made under the influence of his brothers Miers & Samuel—the latter, particularly, the most perverse & prejudiced of men, who probably hated my father, as he certainly was detested by him, & had of course good reason to believe, that I should be brought up under the influence of those who abhorred Quakers & Quakerism. I was not however christened till after my Grandfather's death, when

## Recollections

no further influences could be used against me. I remember being sent for to attend his funeral, when Mr Gilpin's black man-servant carried me in his arms. I can see now the line of relatives & preachers seated by the graveside in the Arch Street cemetery, & especially the eminent Quaker lawyer Nicholas Waln preaching to them & uttering among other things "the grass that withereth, & the leaf that fadeth," etc. He was my grandfather's legal adviser, nearest neighbour, & most intimate friend. The friendship has been transmitted to the present day, through four generations, and my daughter, Helen, is intimate with his great granddaughter, Mary Wilcocks.

There was of course, disappointment at the will, which left me a bare allowance of \$280 per annum, for my education, & some back-lands, which turned out of little or no value [?] the greater part of which I abandoned rather than pay the taxes on them, after I came of age; tho' my grandfather's executors had paid them during my minority, & deducted the amount from my very small inheritance.

I must do my grandfather the justice to state that I think he was convinced they would become, in twenty years, a handsome estate for me. He had purchased them on false representations from Judge Cooper of Otsego, the father of Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, a Jersey man by birth, & a great land-speculator & swindler. They were in Hamilton County, a region, I believe, still wild & unsettled after more than fifty years after my Grandfather's death.

All that I ever heard of Thomas Fisher is honourable to him. For the day he was well-educated, & I have two Latin books which belonged to him. His strong English feelings & his principles as a Friend made him an opponent of the War of the Revolution & he was banished to Virginia with

## The Fisher Family

two of his brothers & his brother-in-law, & many others of his friends & relations. He remained there at Winchester, & afterwards at Staunton in the valley of the Shenandoah, during the occupation of the city by the British Army, which was probably a very fortunate circumstance for the family estates, which thereby escaped confiscation. An account of this banishment may be found in a printed volume entitled "Exiles in Virginia" written by my relative Mr Thomas Gilpin.

My Grandmother Fisher remained in Philadelphia. Her correspondence with her husband is preserved, & has some interest. She resided on Second Street below Dock St. I am not sure if it were the house in which my grandfather died, or one nearer Dock St. which I recently owned. She died soon after the birth of her youngest daughter, Hetty. She was far better educated than most of her contemporaries in the Society of Friends, & her letters, journal and commonplace books & reflections and advice to her children, some of which are preserved, exhibit a refined mind & cultivated taste.

Since I wrote the above about my grandmother, I have had the opportunity of reading her diaries, kept from the beginning of the Revolution till almost the time of her death. It is a simple record of family annals through a period of a great deal of trouble which is much dilated on.\* In it, is evidence of the most unwavering loyalty to good King George—of ill-suppressed joy at the success of his troops and bitter disappointments at their defeats. It is quite clear the family had as much or more to suffer from the army of the government they supported as from the

\* This diary is now in the possession of his great-granddaughter, Mary Helen Cadwalader.

## Recollections

republican forces, (always excepting the seizure of the stores) but the rebels were always in the wrong, always the oppressors. Considering everything it is rather astonishing that the hand of power was not more heavy on the "un-patriotic." The banishment of my grandfather & his brothers was a severe measure; but they had reason to be thankful when permitted to return, that they had been removed during the whole period of the occupation of their native city by the British troops, or they might well have incurred the penalties of confiscation, as Samuel Shoemaker & others did for taking office under the royal authority. My grandmother's father William Logan, was dead; his son George, happily in England. Stenton was spared the fate of most of the suburban residences. It was occupied by General Washington and his staff before, I believe, the battle of Brandywine; but was left entirely uninjured—a moderate contribution being levied on the stores & stock.

The most noted act of persecution the family endured was the imprisonment in the County Jail of my uncle Samuel Rowland Fisher, which I shall narrate at some length when I come to speak of him.

My eldest Aunt, Hannah, afterwards married to James Smith, of Burlington, became early impressed with religious convictions, and very strict in observing the Quaker rules of discipline as to dress, etc., to the great annoyance of my father, who never liked the customs of the Sect, & I am told, several times made a bonfire of her plain caps & dresses, with which she deformed her beauty, which was great in her youth and even in her old age was remarkable. She also took to preaching in her teens, & very early took her place on the bench of the Elders, where she ever was listened to, with respect. Her countenance, as I recol-

## The Fisher Family

lect it, was pleasing, expressive of the greatest benevolence. Her voice was sweet—her sentences well turned, & her discourses brief, consisting generally of a few pious ejaculations & scraps of thought & moral advice. I did not often hear her, for I cannot endure the Quaker Meeting as a place of worship, & I, even as a boy, felt the absurdity of the claim of inspiration for such utterances; I am always mortified that an Aunt of mine, whatever her sincerity, should be giving out such stuff as an emanation from the Holy Spirit.

I can well recollect visiting her at her house, the evening after the death of her husband, when she led me to his dead body, and began immediately a kind of harangue, & my almost irresistible propensity to laugh, and again my petrifaction, when assembled in the house with all our relations, previous to the funeral, at her rising immediately in my rear, and giving vent to her feelings in what no doubt, she believed was a piece of inspiration. She began again at his grave; but apprehending what was coming, I was already hurrying off my Mother, when the notes of her sweet, shrill voice reached my ear.

She sincerely loved & mourned for, her husband, a handsome & amiable, but weak man, very much her senior, who had been twice married; & the conviction that the strong affections of the heart were divine impulses, no doubt produced these exhibitions which would be shocking to the delicacy & feeling of another woman.

She was a person in my opinion of small intellect, but the most active benevolence: of the most generous & self-sacrificing disposition. She was afflicted with a daughter, whose temper and heart, naturally bad, were perverted by injudicious education;—whose vanity, selfishness, & mean-

## Recollections

ness, made her the torment of all her family, whom she tyrannized over by her force of will, if not of intellect. Having none to manage her but her poor weak-minded Mother & her Aunt Hetty, who was all goodness & generosity, she brought on her Mother, by her violence, a series of epileptic attacks of which at last, she died. She nearly killed her good Aunt Hetty, & so terrified her own sisters, that their health was yielding to their constant agitations. After the death of their Mother, which occurred in 1846 they were forced to close their doors upon her, & she has been a wanderer ever since, obtaining a notoriety, happily not attended with moral disgrace, & after the age of fifty, not now likely to bring shame upon her family. She has travelled, seen some distinguished society, been thought by some very handsome & clever, had numerous lovers, none of whom she could make up her mind to marry, but pleased to delude with hopes. She is now, October, 1865, in Europe a second or third time, & I trust may find a home far from her native place & family, where the resources & amusements of old civilisation may take the place of the great objects of her life, the gratification of her personal vanity and social distinction.

My dear Aunt Hetty has been dead since 1839. I loved her more than any of my Father's family. She was devoted to him, and transferred much of her affection to me. Her whole life was given up to the members of her family, who were in sickness or distress, and she had a hard time of it.

Of my Uncles, William & James, James, the youngest, died when I was a boy. I only knew him as a small delicate man. His wife was an heiress of Maryland, the daughter of Sidney George, a wealthy planter of Cecil County, a refined & kind-hearted woman, always herself sick, & dying

## The Fisher Family

of consumption, left three sons to the care of their Uncle William. Although she had emancipated her slaves, while she charged her estate for the support of the old and feeble, she left what ought to have been a good inheritance to her sons, Sidney, James and Henry.

My Uncle William succeeded by his Father's Will, to the paternal home of Wakefield, which would have been his brother Joshua's, if he had lived. My Father occupied it as a bachelor, & it was filled with his furniture, some of which remains to this day.

William Logan Fisher had married a Miss Rodman of New Bedford, a great beauty, who died early, leaving two daughters, Sarah & Elizabeth, and a son. He then married Sarah Lindley of Chester County, a very sensible & handsome woman, who is still alive.

She made an excellent step-mother to his first children, who, I believe loved her as they would have loved their own. I think her about the best specimen of the Quaker lady I know, and I believe she is universally respected.

*November, 1866.*

IT is more than a year since the last line was written. In the mean time my Uncle's widow, died, and the Wakefield estate is now owned & occupied by my cousin, Elizabeth Rodman Fisher.

All her brothers are dead. Her eldest by the same Mother, married Letitia Ellicott of Maryland, a very kind & pleasing woman; they have two sons as yet unmarried, Harvey & Ellicott, & a daughter, Mary, married to George W. Carpenter of Germantown.

My Uncle's eldest daughter, Sarah, by his first wife, is still alive, the wife of William Wister & the Mother of six

## Recollections

sons, a sensible worthy, & unpretending woman. His youngest daughter, Mary by his second wife, is married to Samuel Fox, a gentleman of considerable fortune, excellent character & sense. He has a fine estate on the Alleghany River, where he lives with his widowed mother part of the year. She was Hannah, daughter of George Emlen, a distant relation of mine, through William Logan's wife. Her husband, Joseph Fox's Mother was a daughter of Samuel Pleasants, and a Granddaughter of Israel Pemberton, who was also a cousin of my Grandmother Fisher.

Samuel Fox, by the Will of his cousin, Charles Fox of Champlost, has recently been made co-heir with Dr George Fox of all the estates of the former.

The Wisters have a great inheritance to divide, so that all my Uncle William's descendants are likely to be well off, and some very rich. His two sons by his second wife, Lindley & Charles, both died unmarried, some years ago. Lindley was a very superior young man. He was a loss to the name to which he would have added honour.

My Father seems to have been a very great favourite with all his family. I never heard him spoken of, but with the greatest affection, not only by those of his own family, but by many friends and acquaintances. There are few now who can recollect him at all; and I have not much to tell myself, for my filial affections were so absorbed by him, who so fully & devotedly supplied his place, that I have been in the habit of regarding my immediate progenitor with as little interest as his predecessors, & now must content myself with a scanty record.

My Grandmother's diary often speaks of him in his childhood—but it is rather to record his occasional sickness & absences, than to give an account of his education. He was

## The Fisher Family

much in the country after his Father built Wakefield, & seems to have been very fond of country life. A pretty large fishing apparatus, which he left seems to indicate a fondness for angling, & he certainly had a great taste for horses, rode well, drove handsome vehicles & had a pride in them. I have heard often of his "darling" curricle, of his liveried servants, etc., for which, perhaps, he first received the censure of the Meeting. He was finally disowned for joining the City Troop of Horse, as a member of which he went on the expedition to suppress the Whiskey Insurrection in 1794. I have heard Mr Richard Rush speak of him as sharing his tent on this bloodless excursion.

For many years he kept a bachelor establishment in a house on Chestnut Street above 8th, and in summer, at Wakefield; the hospitalities of which I have heard much, & the relics of which in silver & glass I still retain, & also a few demi-johns of famous old wine, dating from the last century, which was long ago pronounced by Dominick Lynch, acknowledged the best judge in America, as the best extant in our country; & it still retains much of its quality. Its vintage was of 1799. It made two voyages to India in cask, & was bottled on the day of the great Eclipse, in June 1806, from which it takes its name.

But to go back:—He received his education in the old Friends' School on 4th Street, recently demolished, under, I believe Robert Proud. He entered into his Father's Counting House, where he & his bosom friend, Mr Waln, occupied adjoining desks, and if the tradition is true, had much sport & joke to the annoyance of Samuel Rowland Fisher, my good Uncle, & even at his expense; the foundation of a life long animosity towards both of them, & in all probability the reason why my Father did not become

## Recollections

a partner of the mercantile Firm, so well known, & which, I think, still bore the name of "Joshua Fisher & Sons."

He entered into business by himself & engaged largely in trade with the East Indies, which at the end of the last century chiefly tempted adventure. He supposed himself eminently successful, and was regarded as already wealthy when he married my Mother in 1806.

Encouraged by his prospects, he purchased the fine house of Mr Tilghman in Chestnut Street below 8th, afterwards Dr B. P. Barton's & subsequently Mr George Pepper's, & was moving into it, when he was seized with the illness of which he died.

Almost contemporary with his death, occurred the failure of a great commercial house in the East Indies, Batavia, to which he had made large consignments. This event & the loss arising from Mr Jefferson's embargo, were found by his executors, my Uncle Harrison, & Mr Waln, to have so much involved his estate, of which an immediate settlement was pressed, and no assistance given by the Fisher family, that everything was swept away in the payment of debts, & his widow returned to her Mother's house, penniless,—her household goods being all that was saved for her.

I have heard my paternal Uncles charged with the greatest illiberality, & I am inclined to believe, with justice. My Father had ever been generously kind to them; but I suppose my Mother had not conciliated her new Quaker relatives, & the child soon to be born, was to be brought up, out of Meeting.

This had, no doubt, its influence with Samuel R. Fisher, the only active member of the old Firm. The claim which he presented against my Father's estate, & which was rather

## The Fisher Family

incidentally admitted by my Father's executors, is a striking proof of his perverse malignity, and may here be commemorated.

Some time after the establishment of the Government of the United States under President Washington, arrangements were made by the National Treasury for the payment of all goods taken during the Revolution for the services of the Army or Navy, and public notice was given throughout the country, fixing the date, before which all claims must be presented, under pain of forfeiture.

The amount which the Firm of Joshua Fisher & Sons might claim, with interest added, was very large; but the religious and perhaps political principles which they possessed, as they prevented the first voluntary sale, so now forbade any demand for goods used in war-like equipments. This was of course forbidden by the rules and conscience of Friends, & my Grandfather and his Brothers were debarred from any advantage to be derived from this offer.

My Father had no such scruples. He had served in a military Corps. He had armed his ship against pirates. He was advised to procure the consent of his Father & Uncles, & to present himself as their representative, thus taking advantage of an opportunity which they must necessarily forego. The assent was readily given, not by written act, but by perfectly understood acquiescence, and my Father, presenting himself at the Treasury Department, received the National Obligations for the full amount of the debt.

This he always considered as his own, rather a waif than a gift, but clearly understood between himself & his Father & he presumed, his Uncles too. He held the certificates through his life, & on them received the payment of several instalments. After his death, and I believe, after the

## Recollections

death of my Grandfather also—certainly after the latter had sunk into mental imbecility—Samuel R. Fisher demanded the delivery of these certificates to him as the representative of the Firm. As they had not been regularly assigned, the Executors complied. Waiting still further till after the liquidation of my Father's estate, when everything had been distributed, and the Executors had not even charged their own commissions, as there was still a very small deficiency (I believe 5%), Samuel R. Fisher demanded the re-payment of the instalments already received by my Father, with interest! This the Executors resisted; the result was a long law-suit, terminated only after I grew up, in which the representatives of my Father were entirely successful. The charge of Judge Duncan of which I shall append a copy, is very severe on Mr S. R. Fisher & my Uncle W. L. Fisher, who appeared as a witness to implicate his Brother's Executors! He offered to prove admissions which they had never made, & it would seem that they had even yielded more than they could have been compelled to, in the relinquishment of the U. S. Certificates.

Whether Samuel R. Fisher received the unpaid balance of the debt, & if so, how he appropriated it, I never knew; nor what he would have done with the money so unsuccessfully claimed.

From the character of the man I can hardly believe he would appropriate it to himself, & it is not unlikely if he touched any portion of the “blood money,” he appropriated it to some charity of a strange & peculiar type.

His real motive, I believe, was antipathy to my Father, and especially to his Executors, who both disliked him.

My Father was buried in the Francis family vault, with the services of the Episcopal Church, though not a mem-

## The Fisher Family

ber of the Church. This was itself an offence to his relations. Not to his Father, indeed, who loved him most tenderly, and was overwhelmed with affliction, for he was not only his eldest, but his favourite son.

My Father died at the age of twenty-nine! He was a handsome man in his head and trunk, but his legs, like those of many of his family, disproportionately short. He dressed exceedingly well and was a man of very pleasing manners & refined tastes. I have heard my dear old friend, Mrs Robert Hare, speak of him. She knew him in his youth, and I have reason almost to believe that he had more than common admiration for her; for he paid her great attentions when she visited Philadelphia in 1799—then only eighteen years old—and it gives me great gratification to know that a friend, who now in her eighty-sixth year, & who for fifty-six years has excited my unbounded admiration & affection, could have specially attracted my Father so many years before my birth. She told me of a *déjeuner* given her at Gray's Ferry Gardens, of his following her in his phaeton to Bristol, when she returned to Rhode Island, of his supplying her with books, etc. She also had a very pleasing recollection of his friend Mr Waln. But the affair went no further. At that time Horace Binney was paying assiduous, but unsuccessful court to the Rhode Island heiress. Strange that he alone should survive of her admirers. His wounded pride, I believe, never forgave her. Although her son afterwards married Mr Binney's daughter, their intercourse was hardly revived; I never saw him at her house, nor in my constant intercourse have heard of a kind inquiry or attention of any kind, from that unforgiving man! He is now about eighty-eight!

## Recollections

My Mother was only a year younger than her husband.

The court-ship had been long — through several years, I believe, & only brought to a successful issue, by the instrumentality of their mutual friends, especially my Uncle & Aunt Harrison, who both loved & esteemed my Father particularly.

The short marriage was a very happy one. Its termination an event of accumulated distress. My Mother was a long and sincere mourner.

Her incomparable parent did everything for her ; and my birth was, I suppose, a real consolation. My education, the occupation and resource of her life.

Elsewhere I shall delineate the very peculiar excellence of the only natural parent I ever knew.

II  
The Willing Family



## The Willing Family

VERY soon after the death of my dear Aunt, I, for the first time, opened an escritoire in which she was in the habit of keeping her private papers, and in the top of the middle compartment I found a quire of manuscript sewed in a parchment cover, which I immediately recognized as the writing of my Grandmother Francis. This proved to be a long letter of advice on the conduct of life, containing the result of many years reflection on female duties—the reiteration of much private conversation and instruction. It was written in 1787 when my Aunt, her daughter Sophia, then sixteen years old, was absent from home on a visit to her Brother, recently married in Rhode Island. It embraced the whole circle of female duties & a scheme of mental education & moral discipline which not only shewed a deep study of female nature & a large acquaintance with all its relations & duties; but a refinement of feeling & elevation of sentiment which impressed me greatly, & which must have had the highest influence upon her daughter, for whom this long lesson was so carefully prepared. I saw in it not only the fine traits of character always attributed to my Grandmother, but the model on which my Aunt had been formed.

I had no doubt that my Aunt carefully preserved & often read it, and was only surprised that she had never mentioned it to me. My Mother knew of it, & several ladies, their friends, had heard my Aunt speak of it. If my Aunt did not come quite up to the standard placed before her, her refinement & delicacy of mind and conversation, her Kindness and consideration of others, her constant cheerfulness, her gracious & elegant manners, her perfect

## Recollections

domestic economy & her unostentatious hospitality—in all of which she was admitted to be pre-eminent in our society—would naturally lead one to enquire for the school in which she had been trained. Such graces could not be acquired in pretentious Academies where every accomplishment is promised—and we had none in those days—nor under the excellent Anthony Benezet who was my Aunt's schoolmaster; but only from a Mother & such a Mother as her own.

To preserve for my children the memory of their Ancestress, I shall have copies made of her manuscript & of another equally remarkable written by her when my Aunt was a mere child, and at a time when the health of her Mother gave apprehension that the latter could not live to bring her daughters through childhood to that more interesting period for which the longer manuscript was intended to be a guide. Of the latter there are some pages wanting; but of what I have, there is enough to mark its character and give it interest. With both of these I have taken the liberty of making a few verbal corrections & of varying somewhat the punctuation; but I have done no more than is always accorded to an editor in presenting a posthumous production to the public—in no point suppressing or varying the sense.

It is also a part of my plan to prefix a memoir of my Grandmother as handed down by tradition with such help as a good many letters which have been preserved may afford; and to add such notices of her parents & family & friends, & of the society in which she moved, as will preserve as full & just a portraiture as my materials supply, of one of the most admired women of her day & sphere, and of all that surrounded her. This will not be uninterest-

## The Willing Family

ing to my children & I hope will inspire some of them with a portion of the pride I feel in such a worthy descent.

MY maternal Grandmother was born in Philadelphia, July 16th 1733. Her Father, Charles Willing, then a prosperous merchant, resided on the west side of Front Street, at, or near, the corner of Chestnut Street. She was baptised on the 11th of August ensuing, by the Reverend Archibald Cummings, receiving the name of Anne from her paternal Grandmother who was the Granddaughter of General Thomas Harrison, one of the Judges of Charles I. Her mother was Anne Shippen, Granddaughter of the first Mayor of Philadelphia, Edward Shippen.

As the family pedigree will be preserved elsewhere, I need only say, that her Father, Charles Willing, emigrated to this country in 1728. His family was of Bristol & of the commercial class.

Although the name is found in that part of England as far back as the 39th year of Edward III, & in Buckinghamshire in the time of Edward I, as tenants, in both cases, of Abbey lands; they seem never to have aspired to the rank of Squires or Armigers, & only adopted heraldic bearings on the marriage of Joseph Willing, the Grandfather of Charles, with Ava Lowle, an heiress; taking, with her estate of Tockington, the right to a shield which the Willing family has ever since borne as their own, viz: a hand clasping three arrows.

The same inherited from another branch is borne by a very respectable family of Lowell in Massachusetts, descending from Percival Lowle, who came to New England in the middle of the 17th century.

Anne Shippen's parents, Joseph Shippen and Abigail

## Recollections

Grosse have only left their names. Edward, the Father of Joseph, born at Methley, emigrated to Massachusetts soon after 1660, was there converted to the faith of George Fox, & fleeing from persecution to the Quaker Colony of Penn, filled high offices & left considerable wealth to his descendants. Abigail Grosse, the wife of Joseph, was a native of Boston and seems to me to have been of unquestionably plebeian origin.

His Granddaughter, Mrs Powel, who pretended to be proud of her Yankee descent, used to say she was related through her to the Bowdoins & the Elwyns, but I could never make it out; & when Mr Temple Bowdoin & Colonel Elwyn & his cousin G. W. Elwyn admitted the claim of kindred, I fancy it was an act of polite acquiescence to their distinguished hostess.

Thomas Willing, Father of Charles, is said by his Grandson who knew him, to have been an able & respectable merchant and a very honest worthy man. His wife, Anne Harrison, is in the same MS. described as a "woman of fine genius, good education & excellent understanding." There are several traces of the high consideration in which she was held in the circle of her acquaintances, & her letters & verses, the latter chiefly of a religious character, & which were transmitted to her descendants and are perhaps still preserved, were much praised—I never saw them. Her Mother was a Mayne or Meyne, of an old Lincolnshire family. It was for a long time supposed that she was a daughter of Simon Mayne, another of the regicides; but I think I have ascertained this to be an error. Dorothy Meyne or Mayne, whose homely christian name was transmitted to the Willing family, left what was better to her Great-nephew, Thomas, a small estate called Quadring in

## The Willing Family

Lincolnshire, was the Sister of Anne Harrison's Mother. I have mourning rings for Anne Harrison Willing and Dorothy Mayne; & a portrait of the former is preserved, & is now in the possession of John William Wallace, who got it from the family of his wife, Dorothy Francis Willing.

The following is the character of Charles Willing as written by his son Thomas Willing:

"My Father died of a nervous or Fall fever, the 3rd of November 1754, in the 45th year of his age. This disorder then prevailed much in Philadelphia. He was particularly exposed to it by his office of Mayor, to which he had been appointed for the second time, & which he had filled with distinguished honour to himself & satisfaction to the Public. He held other places of public honour & influence, & was one of the founders & first Trustees of the College & Academy in Philadelphia in the year 1750. By great industry, care & ability, he acquired & left a clear estate of about twenty thousand pounds sterling, raised on a capital of £500 sterling, given him by his Father & the like sum given by his Aunt Dorothy Mayne. He was a very healthy man & died in the prime of life. In his person he was handsome, of a manly figure, rather tall & full made, of a healthy fresh complexion, cheerfull in his temper & behaviour. He was affable & courteous to all; but remarkably kind & affectionate to his family & particular friends. As a merchant he was eminently distinguished for his abilities and enterprising spirit, by which he extended & enlarged the trade of Pennsylvania, as well as for his candour & integrity. As a citizen he was greatly useful & was therefore universally regretted."

His wife, Anne Shippen, was a handsome & very amiable woman. Although she had no birthright among

## Recollections

Friends, she was attracted in her youth to that Society, & it is said that Charles Willing, going from curiosity to the Old Bank Meeting, was struck by her beauty, or the freshness of her youth in the simple garb of the Sect, & soon persuaded her to ask with him the connubial blessing of a hireling priest!

A motherless child, she yet had experience in every art of household thrift, & the report of her skill as a needle-woman has been transmitted to the present generation; and well it was that she was so prepared for the task before her. She became the Mother of eleven Children, born within the space of twenty years, and in all this time engrossed by the cares of maternity and domestic economy. When her husband died, her youngest child, Margaret, afterwards Mrs Hare, was not quite two years old.

I possess an interesting memorial of their marriage, in a heavy silver tankard with cover, of English make, with Anne Shippen's name on the bottom. Unquestionably a wedding gift. It is covered with curious ornaments, embossed or chased. In the centre, the Shippen three oak leaves. On each side, in ovals, the busts of George II & his Queen Caroline. Below, in similar ovals, two figures, who may perhaps represent the happy pair. The rest of the surface is covered with flowers, birds & animals; & on the broad, projecting rim of the base, the legend in large antique capitals: "Les Honneurs changent les Moeurs" which does not appear to be the family motto; & the applicability of which to the tankard on the occasion, I leave to my readers to decide!

There was a tradition in the family that this extraordinary and indeed, tasteful chasing was the work of a negro slave! but I have many reasons to doubt this although the work

## The Willing Family

might certainly have been super-imposed on the plain surface of so solid a tankard. I give the story as I have heard it.

The tankard was given to my Grandmother by her Mother, descended to my Uncle Thomas Willing Francis, and was bought by me for my Mother at the sale of his Widow's silver, which was found necessary under her Will, & my acquisition of it was a considerable annoyance to some of the family.

Anne Shippen's eldest daughter, my Grandmother, was too necessary a helpmate to have much time for elegant accomplishments. The poor schools which satisfied all the requirements of the day, and her Mother's instruction in the whole circle of arts that go to make a finished house-wife, were probably all the early education she received. As her life was to be an alternation of good fortune & adversity, this was the best preparation for it, & I shall have occasion to shew hereafter what blessings it brought, not only to her own family, but to the poor around her, & how her plain education turned out, in its small way, to be a public blessing, when the destitution of our army of patriots called for the labours of the wives & daughters of their country to provide what an exhausted commissariat could no longer supply.

An interesting memento of her great skill, at an early age, in needle-work, is preserved in a beautifully chased silver tea-pot & salver, which her Father brought or sent to her from England, when she was only ten or twelve years old, as her reward for making a shirt for him, an article of pride in those days when defective work was not covered up under outer garments. This tea-pot & salver was left to my Mother,\* & is now in my possession in trust for my dear

\* Now in possession of Mrs Hart.

## Recollections

daughter, Sophy, who would never, I am sorry to say, have won such a prize by such an old-world accomplishment.

But the best part of female education depends upon the family circle in which a child grows up, and it may be interesting to mention who were the nearest relations of my Grandmother. Of his, Charles Willing had none in America, & Anne Shippen, it would seem, was much separated from her own; at least the few letters I have of the time give no hint of any intimacy with them. Their intercourse, however, must have been affectionate, if not frequent, from common sympathy and worth.

The eldest brother, Joseph, was called in the family, "Gentleman Joe," I suppose because he did nothing for his support. He probably, as was usual, & as provided by law, had a double share of his paternal inheritance & lived on principal and interest without much distinction, selling a piece of family silver, or a lot of ground, to supply recurring wants, till all was spent. His last years were passed in Germantown. He married Mary Kearney of Maryland, who was, perhaps, the source of all his difficulties; she was a woman of a very bad temper, for which her family were proverbial. They left two daughters; Mrs Wallen & Miss Betsy Shippen, to depend upon the bounties of their more fortunate relations. My Grandmother & her Sisters maintained them in their old age. A very humble house in Union Street, and a small annuity were provided for them by the Will of my Aunt, Mrs Powel, & my Mother took the place of her own in contributing many minor comforts.

Little more can be said about Gentleman Joe: his family were much attached to him & greatly concerned for his distress. His Brother Edward writes on him as "a most affectionate Husband, & a most tender Father." He was a

## The Willing Family

member of Dr Franklin's Junto Club, which indicates good tastes & social qualities, & tends to prove that his misfortunes, if his faults, were not his shame.

Edward Shippen, who was one of the most worthy of his race, received his business education under James Logan, & under him managed for many years, the commercial & financial part of the Proprietary Affairs. Such an association implied many opportunities of literary improvement, which his master, as he was probably not ashamed to call Mr Logan, would readily afford; for there is evidence in his letters of his great interest & respect for him.

I have seen some proof of Edward Shippen's good attainments in Latin, and the part he took in founding & endowing Nassau Hall or Princeton College, of which he was one of the early Trustees, shews his zeal for the promotion of sound learning & religion. Previous to the times I am writing about, he had purchased large landed estates in the interior, of which Shippensburg, founded by him, was the centre. He resided subsequently, & for the most of his life at Lancaster, and was President Judge of the County Court, in which post he was much respected, & for which he had competent attainments. He was the ancestor of all the Shippens in the interior of Pennsylvania, & by his daughters, of the Burds, Yeates, & other respectable families. His eldest son, Edward, was Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. He married my Grandfather's sister, Margaret Francis, & will come under our notice hereafter.

The third Brother, William, was a physician, the first of an honourable series of the same name. He had a large practice in our community, &, as a safe family doctor, was greatly valued. Where he got his professional education does not appear. He lived to great age & died within the

## Recollections

century, at Germantown. His children were the more eminent Professor of his own name, one of the founders of our great medical school; and Mrs Blair, wife of the Reverend Doctor Blair of Germantown, a Presbyterian clergyman of high standing, herself a woman of remarkable intellect, to which many still living can testify. Her daughter married a Mr Robedean, son of a militia General & Committee-man in Revolutionary times—a great patriot & political brawler, better known as the “Pussy-cat General” because he would faint if he saw or was told of a cat in the room with him.

The elder Doctor, called in the family “Pappy Doctor,” was a great favourite with the children; he was very merry & affectionate & would always taste his medicines to prevail on his little patients to gulp them. He probably did not adopt the heroic practice, although it was in vogue in his day, & had little confidence in potent drugs of any kind, for he is reported to have said, a very short time before his death: “Our profession is the science of guessing; the sun shines on our success, & the grave covers our mistakes!” He was somewhat of a sloven, and his caresses were not much more savoury than his doses; but he liked a joke & his appearance was the signal for merriment. His impertinent little great nieces & nephews had heard of an adventure in a grave-yard where he & one of his students had been & where in his fright he left his red roquelaure, the professional garb of the day, & for a long time after, they saluted him with: “Uncle Doctor, where is your red cloak? Why don’t you wear it?” etc., etc. All the rest I can say of him is, that he is constantly mentioned in letters, & always with affection.

The family circle in which my Grandmother grew up

## The Willing Family

was thus very small. Anne Shippen had no Sisters & the only female connection to whom she could look for chaperonage was her Mother's Cousin, Margaret Jekyll, only daughter of Edward Shippen, the second of that name, by his wife, Miss Vanderheyden of Maryland. I have every reason to believe that she owed much to this lady, who had been to England after her marriage, & was no doubt, admitted into the best society of London, as Sir Joseph Jekyll, Queen Anne's Secretary of State, was her Husband's Brother. On her return to America, she lived in good style in the house on Second Street, which was my Grandfather Fisher's at the time of his death, & if there was any fashionable circle in our provincial Capital, she was at the head of it.

There was in those days little literary instruction for women and the prejudice of the majority, even of the rich, was against all accomplishments. Thomas Kinnett, who advertised to teach dancing & the noble art of self-defence, was furiously assailed by Samuel Ffoulke, a Quaker of course, in one of the newspapers, for his audacity in giving the name of accomplishments to what were in his view "detestable vices" and clearly "diabolical." Kinnett was not the first dancing-master in Philadelphia. Watson refers to a Mr Derring who advertises for pupils in 1736, & under the same date mentions John Salomen, a teacher of French and Latin.

Not long after this period, we find mention of the City Dancing Assemblies, & as they were patronized by the Governor & all the Proprietary Officers, their popularity had all the sanction they required.

As my Grandmother speaks of a satisfactory knowledge of French, we may suppose that Mr Salomen was

## Recollections

her teacher. This is all we can know or can guess of her education. Her Brother, Thomas, who was two years older than herself, was her constant companion in childhood, & a devoted & almost romantic attachment was formed between Brother & Sister, which lasted through the greater part of their lives giving interest to such fragments of their correspondence as has been preserved, a correspondence marked by incidents both pleasing & painful. I shall refer to it hereafter.

When my Grandmother was in her seventh and her Brother in his ninth year, the latter was sent to school in England and did not return till his thirteenth and her eleventh year.

In the year 1749, Charles Willing went for the last time to England, to see his numerous family. He took with him his eldest daughter, my Grandmother. All that we know of her visit is derived from some half-dozen letters to her only bosom friend, her Brother, which have happily been preserved. I shall insert pretty large extracts from these, according to their dates—merely recalling the fact that they are from a girl of seventeen, fresh from the quiet family circle of a trading colony, where most of the arts that refine society were altogether unknown. Of the series of letters, many are lost; the first we have is dated at Bristol, February 20th, 1750.

### ANNE WILLING TO THOMAS WILLING

*Bristol, February 20th, 1750.*

AS I believe the later you hear from me, the more agreeable it will be to you, I let alone writing till

## The Willing Family

the last moment, and now have been packing up my things to go to London early in the morning to-morrow. I have hardly time to say anything more than that all our friends are well, except poor Mrs Harrison, who is in a most deplorable condition. I think she is as great an object of pity as anyone in the world, and if it were not for my Uncle Tom she would have starved long ago.

It troubles my dear Father very much to see his family so much altered since he was here. Some people will not I suppose look upon me with so great respect as they might have done had I come when my Grandmother was alive; but among folks of such principles, I do not desire an acquaintance—in short, they are not worthy of anybody's! My poor Grandfather, who is a very good-natured creature, must live one of the most indifferent of lives when we are gone. You cannot imagine how much he is transported with joy, at his having a Granddaughter grown up! To be sure he thinks nobody has so fine an one as he!

I had a letter from my Uncle Tom yesterday—he is a most charming man, and I wish with all my heart, he may have the greatest luck in all his undertakings. . . . He writes me there is a new play taken from Gil Blas which I imagine must be a very good one, and I long to see it acted. . . . I intend going to see Aunt Hand the first week in May. I believe her to be very good, & as worthy a woman as lives, & I long to know her & her little flock. I am now going to my Aunt Willing's to spend the evening for I am never happy but when I am with Cousin Patcham & Cousin Molly, who have behaved so very kindly to me ever since I have been in Bristol, that I should be a most ungrateful creature not to acknowledge it. A day or two ago I was to visit Miss Brechdale. She is just come from

## Recollections

Paris; but I don't think she could have improved much by going—else she must have been a very impolite person before; indeed, I think her very far from being one of the most genteel in the world. . . . I was afraid I should not be able to write above a dozen words when I sat down—but instead of that have written, or rather scrawled, a long letter. Indeed, dear Brother, if you knew the pleasure I have in conversing with you, though it is in this dumb way, you would excuse it.

Pray, when you write, tell me your opinion of Betty Plumstead, for I have heard so many encomiums on her that six months must have altered her very much. I suppose I shall by the next ship hear of her marriage to some Scotch beau, for that fine fortune will marry her very soon.

Please give my compliments to everybody, not forgetting good Mrs Lloyd, and be assured, dear Brother, that I am, with the greatest sincerity,

Your most affectionate Sister,

W.

*London, March 23rd, 1750.*

. . . In my last letter I told you how I had passed my time this winter, so I won't take up much time now with what I have done with myself since I came to London, which is that I have been at the Oratorios, Plays, Ridottos and to Breakfast at Ranelagh\*; all of which I like extremely well; but I must not grow too fond of them, for without a good fortune and you, I must live in Phil-

\* Ranelagh was a villa near Chelsea. At it a large Amphitheatre was constructed with boxes around it where the company sat and took refreshments when tired with promenading in the Arena to the music of an Orchestra. This building was used for the last time at the Institution of Knights of the Bath in 1802, it is presumed, for a banquet. Vauxhall was a large garden with Orchestras, theatres, and arbours for refreshments. J. F. F.

## The Willing Family

adelphia, as that is the most agreeable place without money. I have, however, vanity enough to believe that I might marry extremely well here; for the men of this age love something odd—as I am an American, the very name is new to them—but while my family is in Philadelphia, I cannot live away from them, though I had ever so good offers. . . . Your poor Patience will now be quite vain; for the thoughts of being loved and esteemed by anyone in England is something more than could be expected. I assure you that if I could countenance it, there are more than one or two or three that would pay their addresses to me. But don't, dear Brother, think that it is possible for me to forget myself; but still believe that I have the same humble opinion of myself that I ever had, & that I only speak my mind to you as I used in the garden or in the court, thinking what I said was as safe as if wrapt up only in my own mind. I only wish I could have that pleasure now; for a friend to advise with is the best happiness this world produces.

I will not say as one often does when one wants to leave off, that there is no news—for there is, & what must concern every well-wisher of this Nation. No less than the loss of the most worthy Prince of Wales—a man loved & esteemed by all who knew him. As his death was sudden the concern appears greater. In short the trouble that you see in everyone's face, makes London, the once gay & charming place, quite melancholy & stupid. All diversions are quite over now, so that I am vastly unlucky. Orders are issued to shut up all for two months or more, which is longer than my Father proposes staying in the city. I never saw anybody so homesick as he is in all my life. In short his family is all he thinks of. . . . I went the

## Recollections

day before yesterday to a painter's to sit for my picture as you are desirous of having it, but hope you will soon have the original. . . .

*Bristol, February 9th, 1751.*

. . . I have spent most of my time since I came from London, at Bath, a place I think, the most agreeable of any I have seen in the season. Indeed, I have vast reason to think well of it, not only because it has restored me a good share of health; but because I have received so many civilities from everybody there, & that you know will make any place agreeable. As to Bristol, it is a very good place where anybody may live happy and easy; though they have not so many diversions as in London or at Bath. Yet there are enough for any reasonable person. There is an Assembly every week and a concert once a fortnight which I always go to when I am here. There is a great deal of good company.

Many ladies were so kind as to come to see me when I first came to Bristol, & some made very kind inquiries after you! None asked with more fervency than Mrs Pennington, Miss Oliver that was, & said that you promised a letter the first ship. That worthy good woman, Mrs —— is dead after only one week's illness. She was a pattern to everyone, & I fear, has left few like her. She said she came to see me only out of the great regard she had for my good Grandmother and that she should love me for her sake. About three weeks ago I saw Mr Wheeler & I think I never saw more good nature & good sense in any person, or was ever so much charmed with anyone in so little time. He was so kind as to give us an invitation to Wells, where I intend going when I come to Bristol again, which

## The Willing Family

will be in July, as I fancy it is a most agreeable place in summer. My Uncle has been down for this month, & went up only last Monday, to London where I do suppose Papa and I shall go in ten days. Oh! that London!

I have had two or three letters from Cousin Jekyll which I think was a favour I could hardly expect from her; but she is really a friend & an extreme good one. She has done, & would do, all in her power I am sure, to oblige any of her family. She speaks of going into the city, by which we may infer her residence was in the neighbourhood, perhaps at Clifton— & purchased for her Brother what she calls a very genteel waist-coat, yellow, embroidered with silver. . . .

*Bristol, June 19th, 1751.*

I THOUGHT I had deserved better of you than to imagine that my time was so taken up by tinselled fops as to prevent my writing to one for whom I had more esteem than for anyone else. I believe I have wrote full as often as my opportunities, though not so frequently as I could wish to.

I believe, dear Brother, I may be set down as a great traveller, for I have been almost all over England & still you see I am not Spoiled, by my wanting to come home again, though, I must say, whenever I leave England, it will be with the greatest reluctance.

I am so well acquainted everywhere, and everyone has treated me with such generosity, joined with good nature & complaisance, that every place is like home to me. Judge then of the affection I must have for our dear family, to leave this sweet delightful place, to go to one so solitary as America, without doubt, is!

## Recollections

I used to be very merry when Mr Tasker\* and I got together, praising our Country and climate & striving to make strangers believe it was a *nonsuch!* I mention this gentleman as I believe he will be in America before I shall, and he promised to wait on my Mother & you. I imagine that anyone that was intimate with me would give you pleasure to see & therefore I need say nothing more of him than that he is a very agreeable companion, a man of sense & genteel behaviour, & has what most of the world cares most for—that is, a pretty fortune. But perhaps you may think it odd in me to say so much of any gentleman, which is what I seldom do, but to you, so dear as you are to me, I speak out my mind without thinking whether it is right or wrong. Therefore excuse me for anything I do or say which is not consistent with prudence or good nature.

Bristol, July 9th, 1751.

I RETURN you many thanks for your agreeable favour of the 15th of May; not only because you wrote to a sister who must appear an ungrateful wretch for so long neglecting to write to you, but for your kind declaration of writing with pleasure ten to my one letter. So kind and good a thought, my dear Brother, is what few Sisters can boast of. The agreeable news of your recovery from that detestable ague, has quite revived my spirits which were a little low with leaving dear London, & parting with my friends in Staffordshire; for though you'll say they are of no long standing, yet they are, I believe, truly sincere & it is not easy to part with such.

The Wells races are to be on the 9th of this month, &

\* Benjamin Tasker Esq: afterwards Governor of Maryland under Lord Baltimore.

## The Willing Family

Mr Wheeler has been so kind as to ask me to his house; I do not know but I may go. I shall see it with double pleasure as it is a place you so long resided at, but I shall not have your dear company to escort me thither. I am sorry time won't permit me to say more than that I am, with the greatest sincerity,

Your most affectionate friend and Sister

A. WILLING

My dear Grandfather desires his blessing to you.

The only other letter of the period which has been preserved is from Mr William Watts, in whom, as will appear, she excited no ordinary interest. It has its value in connection with the preceding extracts, in its reference to the amusements & gaieties in which she participated while in England, and I shall therefore quote it entire. It was written, as its date shows, on the eve of her departure for America.

*London, 16th of July, 1751.*

A THOUSAND thanks to dear Miss Willing for the favour of the 11th, curr<sup>t</sup>, & glad I am I offended, for your manner of complaining or blaming is charming. Don't you observe we both wrote the same day, which proves, to compliment myself, "Good wits jump." One thing is luckily in my favour; I wrote before your reprimand arrived! But I conjured it would come & so played cunning!

I am glad you out Marybone us! I wish, wherever you are, everyone would outdo us as much as an American of my acquaintance outdoes the Europeans — then you might find agreeable company & always play in concert.

A continued sameness stupefies our senses; nothing

## Recollections

new! 't is always Vauxhall or Ranelagh! always the Gunning's and their candidates! I have never seen them since with you—nor desire any party after the Newmarket one, being the most agreeable I ever saw. But amidst your public amusements, is all safe within? shall you leave the Isle heartwhole? Can you take your departure unstricken? Are you now for romantic strains such as "Hail to the woods & groves, hail to the purling stream! Balls plays & dancing, adieu!" If so, 't is well, for sure to carry about one an incurable, perhaps unsearched wound, must be the greatest torture human nature can feel. Therefore take a friend's advice. Let not that in to your mind, you can't at any time say begone! Keep peace in your heart as the most desirable blessing—believe slow—doubt much—but never doubt but that I am dear Miss Willing's sincere friend,

W. WATTS

If my readers should decide that the above letter was written by a young man who may have had any pretensions as a lover at a previous period, then they must give my Grandmother credit for winning the affections & admiration of one of the most distinguished men in the history of British India, who as Governor of Fort William, (the Presidency of Bengal) laid the plans & procured the means for the successes of the great Lord Clive, in whose life by Malcomb, there are frequent references to Mr Watts's great services. I am rather under the impression that it was his father, a married man, who wrote thus with the gallantry of a young man to the fair American who, in somewhat humbler sphere, is reported by tradition to have turned as many heads as her brilliant contemporaries, the Misses Gunning!

## The Willing Family

This inference of mine is drawn from a letter of Mr Thomas Willing, my Grandmother's Uncle, written to her June 10th, 1768, & the following extract has, out of this relation, even an historical interest.

“. . . I have at last succeeded in serving our old friend Watts's son. He is certainly a good man as well as a great genius. He alone laid the plan of the late revolution in the East Indies which Colonel Clive executed; for the account of which I refer you to the newspapers. As the directors of the East India Company were villains enough to put a man over his head who was not there at the time, and all Watts's letters & papers to his Father were in my hands, I published them in the Newspapers, which raised such a bustle, that the Proprietors called a general Court, turned out the old Directors, chose a new set who appointed Mr Watts sole Governor of Bengal, in case of the death or resignation of Colonel Clive, who is on his way home. I believe Mr Watts has got about £100,000 which may make ample amends for his late losses. But if he stays there he is made. A man may make Nabobs or be a Nabob in the East Indies. The next day he is strangled or his foolish head is cut off. I don't think life worth much, unless in the Dominions . . . where every man is equally free & may call a Prince to an account as well as a porter.”

What is wanting in description of the phases of English life presented to my Grandmother may be supplied in a measure by the Memoirs of the day, and especially the letters of Horace Walpole. Her friends seemed to have studied her gratification and to have taken her to every place of public amusement, in those days much more frequented by people of fashion than at present. Garrick was

## Recollections

then at the height of his fame. Foote and Cibber, Mrs Woffington and Pritchard, presented with the highest talent, the comedies which modern refinement has withdrawn from the stage. The Opera had more encouragement from fashion than our improved taste would admit that it deserved. Concerts and Oratorios were frequent, & all these we can say our Grandmother attended & enjoyed. Vauxhall & Ranelagh were crowded, & the high nobility then mixed on pretty easy terms with society, which, I must think, was very exceptional if very pleasant. Both of these resorts, so famous in their day, have long ago disappeared. Ranelagh, which was called from its former noble proprietor, whose pious wife was a friend of William Penn, was closed with the last century. I visited Vauxhall in its last days of decline in 1832. Cremorne is their successor & it may be a sign of the improved morals of society that virtuous matrons no longer consent to mix with the demi-monde as their Grandmothers did. It was all very pleasant, however, and I refer to Walpole for a picture which it is not my part to give.

My Grandmother, if she did not see high life in private, certainly did in public at the above named places, at Assemblies, at the Newmarket Races, & especially at Bath, then in the period of its greatest splendour, when the celebrated Beau Nash was in his prime, & at the zenith of his still undisputed reign over the world of fashion.

Under the arbitrary rule of this famous Master of Ceremonies, Bath was undoubtedly the best school of manners in the Empire. The highest nobility & the English provincials, the Irishman and the Scotchman, the West-Indian & the Yankee, here mixed on an equality & submitted with what grace they could to the discipline of this elegant cox-

## The Willing Family

comb. Under him, at least, modest merit could not be insulted by monied or aristocratic insolence, and beauty & grace were sure to be distinguished. Nothing like it has ever existed in that or any other land & never will. At the end of the century, the beautiful city of Bath, whose claim as a watering place was appreciated by the Romans, was the centre of refined Colonial Society, embracing many American refugees, & it is still the resort of decayed gentility; but its fashionable influence ended with the death of its first great Arbiter Elegantiarum, whose full-length portrait adorns the scene of his glory, the great Assembly room, never again to attract such brilliant company.

On the whole, my Grandmother must have had better opportunity of forming manners & taste in dress, than was in those days offered to her country-women. The brilliant success of the Gunnings, whom she had met, was one of the lessons of fashionable life for those who aimed at its prizes. These lovely Sisters, daughters of an Irish gentleman, so poor, that at first it was thought that their only career would be the stage, & who were at first presented at the Vice-Regal Court of Dublin in dresses loaned by the celebrated actress Peg Woffington, created such an excitement of admiration by their beauty & the charm of their manners that all the beaux of England were at their feet, & after an unprecedented career in the world of fashion, they became, the one, the Duchess of Hamilton, & the other, the Countess of Coventry, & proved themselves full worthy of their exalted rank.

We may judge by the letters above cited, that our fair American, though delighted, was not too much dazzled to enjoy the modest hospitalities of her own kinsfolk, & that she returned to her trans-Atlantic home with more regret

## Recollections

at her separation from those dear friends, than for the termination of a brief & brilliant career in which her heart could find no real enjoyment.

Of all her English friends & relations, the one to whom she became most tenderly attached, was her bachelor Uncle, Thomas Willing, the junior of her Father by many years. I possess a fine miniature of him, painted for my Grandmother, representing an undeniable gentleman with a handsome, manly face & the marked features of his family.

In the MS. memoir left by his nephew, my Grandmother's Brother Thomas, he says that this Uncle had been a merchant in London, was a Director of the Bank of London, & one of the Directors of the African Company; a man of abilities, sound understanding & fair character. He accompanied his Brother Charles to Philadelphia in 1742, & returned to England in two or three years. Later in life he had chambers in the Temple, though nota member of the Legal profession, & died in 1772 at Longford in Middlesex.

Almost all that I can tell of him besides is derived from the following letters, which I copy as they are, and the correspondence of my Grandfather Francis when he was in England in 1767 & 68, which will give me another occasion for special reference to him. His letters in a good hand and good style, evince a kind heart, a gay & happy temper, considerable cultivation & taste, & strong family affection — but above all, a devotion to his niece who maintained the first place in his heart till his death.

The letters preserved must be but a small part of the long correspondence. We cannot but regret the loss of the answers from America as they would give a picture of society in Philadelphia and materials for an account of my Grandmother's career during a very interesting period of

## The Willing Family

her life, which we must gather and guess at from other & scanty sources.

T. WILLING TO HIS NIECE, ANNE WILLING

*London, October 31st, 1754.*

DEAR INDIAN,

AS 't is very evident from your style that you continue the same saucy girl you used to be, I shall give over all thoughts of your reformation, & throw away no serious advice upon so notorious a mad-cap! The very first time I mentioned my intention of saving money & leading a sober, righteous & godly life, you sit down with the true spirit of a woman inspired by contradiction & turn all the sayings of your venerable old Uncle into ridicule. You taunt me with my silence—suppose some love affair is the cause —& then call me Old Bachelor: Just as [if] you said, “Uncle, you are but a queer sort of a fellow, & every woman must laugh at you. You must live an old Bachelor and the wisest thing you can do is to hang yourself!”

Watts has sent you a box of things to make you as fine as the fore-horse of a team. There are gimcracks of all kinds to dress yourself up in, & by what I saw of it, when you do get all your finery on, you will laugh at yourself for being such a fashionable goose! Why may I not call you names as well as you me?

I've sent the shoes you wrote for. As to books, there's not one published of late will bear reading. The author of a novel called “The Marriage Act” has been sent to prison for writing it, so as 'tis likely there's some mischief in it, I have sent it to you. Something amusing will no doubt come out this winter & you shall have it to entertain you as you take a philosophical walk in your garden, where after

## Recollections

planting some flowers, you may retire to your favourite morning seat, read, think of the folly & nonsense of the world, & then, like a true Philosopher, forget all, go home, dress yourself devilish fine & go to an Assembly!

There's woman's Philosophy for you!

I received the bundle you sent by Mr Kid, they are all at the scourers but I fear will not be in time to go by Hargrave's ship.

I beg you will remember me most affectionately to your Mother & your Sister Stirling whom I wish very happy, & the rest of your endless innumerable family.

Adieu, dear Nancy,

I am your affectionate friend & coz

THOMAS WILLING

The solitaire is packed in the teapot sent your Brother. He mentioned it to be set in gold; so I could send none but garnets and rubies; I assure you it's much admired!

*London, 30th of June, 1755.*

MY DEAR NANCY,

I CANNOT omit the first opportunity of answering your kind letter, though, I assure you, the subject is so very disagreeable to me, I had resolved never to mention it to you. What you felt on this occasion I can easily know by myself; for I think 't is impossible for anyone to feel more than I have done. Let us agree not to mention this anymore to each other, although I could not talk of it or write of it to anyone but you. All I can say is, that whether you look upon Life in a religious or a philosophical light, it is equally uncertain, I had almost said, contemptible. You are right in observing that time will in some degree cure these evils: Nature has given Time as a cure to the lower

## The Willing Family

part of mankind; but men of nobler souls will not wait for such a cure: They will heal their own wounds by reflection & magnanimity, which distinguish them from the rabble; by rabble, I mean, Kings, Lords, tailors, shoemakers, & such-like Heroes, who happen to be born, rich or poor, & have no other distinction, except that the two last are generally better & more useful in the world, than the two former!

The best advice I can give you is avoid too much solitude, & when you are alone, to read some book to amuse or satisfy your mind.

Mr and Mrs Watts write to you by this conveyance. They both love you dearly and wish you here for a few months to alleviate the weight of sorrow you feel. You see, my dear Indian, how contemptible a thing is life. Where was there a man more indefatigable, more sagacious in business, more fortunate, of a better constitution?—how happy in his family, & more easy in his circumstances, than your Father?—what then? one stroke of Fate levelled him with the meanest of mankind!!

Few men in the world had reason to be so happy as he might have been, if he had not been too anxious! How could he have borne the plagues, difficulties, & uncertainties, Nay, the deceptions I have known, I could not have borne them myself, if I had not conceived so great a contempt for mankind in general; their little, dirty souls, & perfidious actions, that the greatest pleasure I have in the world is laughing at their foolish pursuits & grave follies!

I have delivered to Captain Ritchie the six pair of black shoes you sent for, & the silks you sent over last fall to be cleaned . . .

Your affectionate friend & coz,

THOMAS WILLING

## Recollections

*London, 8th August, 1755.*

DEAR INDIAN,

I AM angry with you for thinking that either business or company could make me forget you, or even once neglect writing to you. I was never very fond of business, & I begin to be a little tired of company. I do assure you I have lost at least half my gaiety since I saw you. I don't know if there's any consideration can make amends for the want of a continual flow of spirits, and I find mine so much abated within these last eight months, that, as I can't expect to have the same relish for pleasure, I shall endeavour to be as easy & as tranquil as I can.

I thank you for the account you give of your American affairs. We expect War very soon. The French Ambassador went away a fortnight ago without taking leave of the Court: upon which our Minister at Paris came away without taking leave.

I am glad your Sister is safely brought to bed, on which pray congratulate her, with my sincere wishes for her health & happiness. Mr Stirling sails in a few days for Antigua with Commodore Franklin. I can't think how a man could think of marrying when he is in such an unsettled situation. For my part, I know I can bear any misfortune or disappointment as I am circumstanced; but I could never tear a young creature's heart to pieces whose happiness depended on my living with her.

Dear Nancy, your affection for your Brothers & Sisters gives me much pleasure & is the best tribute you can pay to the memory of your Father. I assure you I find I loved him ten thousand times more than I thought for & whenever I am alone, or at the places we used to be at together,

## The Willing Family

the thoughts that come across me bring tears into my eyes & sometimes over-power me.

Pray remember me most affectionately to your Mother and to your Brothers & Sisters, particularly to my little God-daughter, whose last letter has given me much pleasure. I am entirely of your opinion as to Mr Morris's situation, that it is a very uneasy one. I beg my compliments to him and also to my old friend Mrs Jekyll whom I often think of. There are no books or pamphlets worth reading come out yet, but I will send you some soon. I have sent you an ode lately published in one of our papers which I am very much pleased with—I think you will be, for 't is certainly a delicate piece of satire.

My dear Indian, God bless thee, I am always  
your most affectionate friend & coz  
THOMAS WILLING

*London, 3rd August: 1756.*

DEAR INDIAN,

I MUST not miss an opportunity of answering your letter & thanking you for your news. I wish I could send you any in return that might be agreeable to you, but all our public affairs are now conducted in such a spirit of stupidity and . . . that I own I expect nothing will come out of our wonderful War but more debts or a scandalous . . .

I have sent you the magazine which will . . .

You know the fine figure we have made in the Mediterranean, where we suffered the French to land & attack Minorca, though we knew of it in the beginning of February & had 275 men-of-war, yet sent . . . & picked out an Admiral who would not fight. Otherwise the whole French Fleet had been destroyed, & all their army taken

## Recollections

prisoners of war. Old General Blakeny defended the place with 2,000 men including labourers, etc., for more than two months against the whole French army. You may see by the songs I send how much the people are enraged, and with cause; yet I dont expect the rascals will be punished. I have seen an epigram on the Byng engagement which I think is a good one; so I have sent it on the other side . . .

### *Naval Arithmetic*

With thirteen ships to twelve, says Byng,  
It were a shame to meet them:  
With twelve to twelve, it were a thing,  
Impossible to beat them!  
If *more's* too many, *less* too few  
And *even*, still not right,  
Arithmetic must prove it true  
'T were wrong in Byng to fight!

The ring is not brought home. . . .

*London, June 16th, 1757.*

DEAR INDIAN,

SINCE I had the pleasure of writing to you last, I have had no news from you, which I cannot wonder at, considering you have an embargo on the ships which is the only way I know to prevent their being taken by French Privateers, unless they sail under convoy.

Last Fall I sent you some books which were carried to Brest instead of Philadelphia. Among them was the translation of a French novel which I was teased to subscribe to—A few days ago at a Booksellers I met with the same wonderful performance. I wish it may be worth your reading: otherwise I must ask your pardon for letting your name appear among the subscribers. I have not had time

## The Willing Family

to read it; but have seen Brown's Estimate, which I now send you, & own there is much truth in it. I know the Author & think him a very sensible Cox-comb. You will find a great deal of observation & truth in the book, mixed with some most conceited phrases & expressions. He sometimes vexes me, I cannot tell what he means on the 25th page by "a rude & random bolt, or a lifeless ball sleeping in a cannon." I have heard that a fool's bolt is soon shot, but how anything can sleep which is lifeless I do not understand. I ween & I trow are conceited expressions unknown to a good taste: & yet, with all these & many more faults, his method is so well regulated, his imagination so lively, & his satire against the pretended virtue & real corruption of the English is so just, he has given me great pleasure.

I am sorry to tell you poor Watts has met with a most calamitous stroke in his son's misfortune in the East Indies. I fear he is totally ruined, but he writes to his Father like a man of great sense and virtue. Another friend of mine has been entirely ruined by this cursed accident & from a fortune of £40,000 has been reduced to nothing.

These turns of Fortune convince me every day of the folly of valuing money so highly as we do. A little with economy will answer all good purposes, and if it is lost by any accident 't is more easily recovered than large sums.

What madness the making a heap of ridiculous jewels, plate, & other trumpery, almost necessary to our happiness by our imitation of those mad people whom we call people of fashion; for as somebody says—"for one madman in Bedlam there are a thousand running about the streets!"

I hope soon to hear of Admiral . . . 's being arrived in America and that Lord Lowdon will be able to make the French retire. As to conquests on either side, I laugh at

## Recollections

them. Nor can I tell why we should expect any success when we have been now six months without any Ministry: but for anything I see, things are as well managed without Ministers as with, and when we have no design at all, the Devil is in it, if we can be found out!

Adieu, my dear Nancy,

& believe me always your affec. friend & coz,

THOS. WILLING

*London, June 10th, 1758.*

I SHOULD be unpardonable if I neglected any longer to thank my dear Indian for both her kind letters. I will tell you one truth, which on all occasions remember when I miss writing to you, that there is no person in the world to whom I write with half the pleasure as to yourself; and as I have but an hour at present, business shall give way to pleasure, & I will enjoy it in conversing with you who are the only person in the world I write to unless upon necessity; for I don't know how it is, but I hate writing from having been excessively fond of it.

I have often seen Mr Hamilton whom I ever esteemed, as he is certainly a man of honour and great merit. Our old friend, Mr Morris, I fear is making bad worse. I really pity him. Pray tell Mrs Jekyll that I waited on her Brother as soon as I received her letter & found her son was fixed at a very reputable Academy at Kingston. I have a very high opinion of the young gentleman & am very sorry so much time has been lost on his account. His Uncle lives too secluded a life to have the care of a young man, etc. I wonder how the Devil a man can answer it to keep a young fellow in such a total neglect of everything but hearing his foolish stories. If a young fellow is not bred up to

## The Willing Family

be of use in the world he had better be dead and leave his place to a more useful being.

I had a letter a few days ago from Captain Stirling who was well. He is gone on the expedition against St Malo, under Commodore Howe. We hear to-day he landed on the 6th; pray give my love to poor Dolly & tell her I pity her being so long a "Widow bewitched." I really think Captain Stirling has been neglected. He is certainly an active, good officer. I believe the bad behaviour and idleness of Admiral Franklin under whose protection he went to the West Indies, has greatly prejudiced him.

I laugh at your resolutions against matrimony. I conclude you have some thoughts of that kind by your talking so much against it: and as to your *resolutions*, Oh, Lord! To be sure no woman ever altered her mind! They are the most determined creatures in the world! I expect to hear by the next ship you are married the day after you wrote to me which is the 28th of March, for you certainly would not be so superstitious as to defer it four days longer!

I am more vexed than you or your Brother together at those cursed chandeliers. I wish your order had been more exact, I could not tell whether they were for a private or a public room. . . . Can't they be disposed of at Boston or New-York if your Assembly Rooms are supplied?

I have at last succeeded in serving our old friend Watts' son [here follows the extract quoted before on page 57].

Mr Apthorp of Boston, who desires his compliments to you is this moment come in upon my appointment, in an affair of some consequence to us both. I must therefore leave off.

Adieu dear Nancy, my love to everyone of your family,  
I am, most affectionately yours

THOMAS WILLING

## Recollections

London, June 21st, 1759.

DEAR INDIAN,

I SHOULD have wrote to you a fortnight ago, had I been able, but I was just recovering from a severe attack of a fever and indeed had no great reason to expect the pleasure I now enjoy in writing to you again. Upon my soul I never omitted writing to you from any want of affection or friendship. My mind is too much engaged and tost about by stupid business; and for want of more rational or domestick amusements, I harass rather than unbend myself with foolish pleasures which at the same time I despise. 'T is just as ridiculous for a man to eat too much & to remedy the evil, drink too much. The true way is to be moderate. I will be wiser hereafter & perhaps as somebody says, it will be when I am *good for nothing else* & have lost all my passions.

I thank you for the confidence you repose in me as to your sentiments on matrimony. I am entirely of your opinion that similitude of manners, sentiments, principles, age & fortune are the most probable means of attaining happiness in that state. Never-the-less, as I know you so well, I will confess to you at this time no very high opinion of a married life. I believe it is right in general & an honest, good-natured girl and boy may love one another like *mad-folks*—marry young, be very industrious, get money, children, & titles: such as Mr Alderman, and Lord Mayor of London. I am not such a cox-comb, or rather so impious, as to find fault with the progress of nature. I only say, that, as to myself, my mind is debauched by living in London always; or it unfortunately happens that in the small circle of my female acquaintance, I do not know one I would choose to live in the house with. They are Rane-

## The Willing Family

lagh-mad, Vauxhall-mad, Playhouse-mad—mad to be eternally admired: without any tenderness of soul or love for one object. They act love but forget the passion, the life & soul of it, without which they are only upon the same footing as certain ladies who walk the Strand of an evening. I do not doubt there are many other than such in England; but as I do not know them, I fancy I shall continue an old bachelor. Nothing will tempt me to give up that state but an honest heart, great good-nature, and no affectation.

I never said or wrote so much in my life on the subject, . . .

*London, April 8th, 1760.*

DEAR INDIAN,

YOU judge very right that I have had great pleasure with Dolly, in talking over family stories & a thousand enquiries after my relations & acquaintances in the New World. There is something in her conversation so lively and natural, that I would, with the greatest pleasure spend three or four hours in every twenty-four with her. But the Devil so orders it that business interferes in such a manner I can only call on her at such times as suit Mr Ew . . . with whom she is & has been ever since her . . . , they are very good & worthy people and would not let her out of the house 'till she is brought to bed; & though I have the highest esteem for them, for their friendly & affectionate behaviour to Dolly, yet I am so odd a fellow, that whenever I am under the least restraint, I am miserable. I cannot sit a quarter of an hour in that house without being tired to death & I know no reason but because they are very exact & formal: so that though I seldom fail to call on Dolly every day, I hardly once in ten

## Recollections

times stay an hour. I can't help thinking what a fine figure I should make if I were married! I am only sure of one thing, that if I find myself mistaken in the woman, by Heavens! I will not live with her to make myself miserable from fear of what the world will say! Let them say what they will: I will do what I think right & try to be happy.

But as my wedding-day is at too great a distance for me to guess when or if it will ever be; no more of it at present! I most heartily wish your Brother Charles as much [happiness] as an honest young man in love with a young girl either deserves or desires. I think I can wish him no more.

I have wrote to your Brother Tom on the subject of our late shyness. If I had made stronger resolutions on that subject, your goodness of heart & tenderness would have touched my soul. But I did not want that inducement. My own inclination & desire [is] to be in friendship with one I loved so sincerely and it would have been unreasonable to expect any other satisfaction than his own assurance that he did not intend to put a slight on me. I firmly believe it & shall never think of it again.

You ask me a nice question—"whether Dolly is happy?" I will do all in my power to contribute to her happiness. I believe, though I never asked her, she would gladly have stayed in Philadelphia had it been possible, but this is the consequence of engaging in marriage for love only, without reflection: so now she must race after her Captain, & sing,

*"I'll be a Captain's lady O!  
Farewell to my friends & my Daddy O!"*

I sometimes think, or am almost tempted to believe that we are not our own masters; but are actuated by a set of violent passions which run away with us like a headstrong

## The Willing Family

horse: 'tis certain, I think, the world is kept up & put in motion by human passions and not by human reason: it would be miserably managed indeed if it were governed by so short-sighted directors: therefore when I see young folk commit any errors, if they are honest natural follies, I like them not a jot the worse because a cynical rascal in a fur gown, says it is not consistent with wisdom! I despise such a blockhead's wisdom. The precepts of what is called Philosophy are nonsensical, & the moment they contradict Nature & common good sense which God has given in every age of the world and in every Nation, when their bodies have not been enslaved and their souls misled by Priests!

I am, my dear Indian,  
yours affectionately,

THOMAS WILLING

*London, May 20th, 1762.*

DEAR INDIAN,

MR. SHIPPEN has just called to take leave of me, as he proposes to set out to-morrow for Bristol on his way home, & I cannot miss the opportunity of congratulating you on your marriage with Mr Francis. I most heartily wish you both all possible happiness & I beg you will present my compliments to him on the occasion. Mr Shippen waits, so that I have not time to answer your last kind & obliging letter. I shall set out to-morrow with Dolly for Oxford & Litchfield. She is very well considering.

I see everybody is to be married but I; so if my Grandmother were alive I would rather marry her than die an old bachelor, notwithstanding 'tis so strongly forbid in the Scripture, which was necessary from the great probability of such a natural & desirable connection.

## Recollections

As I am quite unacquainted with every circumstance of a regular family life, it would be very kind in you to give me some account of the matter. I have no doubt of its being very fine, & even if it were not, your description would make it so.

But I forget I am writing to a married woman. How can I tell but I may be called to account? I think this would hardly be deemed Crim: Con: by an honest jury and therefore I consent to your shewing it to your Husband for his opinion.

I am, dear Nancy,

your most affectionate friend & servant,

THOMAS WILLING

*London, 6th April, 1766.*

DEAR INDIAN,

FOR, if I am not allowed to call you by that name still, I should never suppose I was writing to the same person; and this preliminary being settled, I must now thank you for your very kind letter & enquiries after my health, which is much better than ever I knew it, and I cannot help telling you what seems to me almost incredible, that I am really growing fat and lazy.

You may assure yourself I never think of you but with great pleasure; for distance of time & place makes no alteration in my sentiments. I am much pleased with your account of yourself & your family, and congratulate you on the continuance of your good spirits, especially as I think they are the general effects of good health which I hope you will always enjoy.

I cannot help smiling at the political part of your letter, & commend your resolution of always living in a country of Liberty! I should almost think the great spirit raised among the Americans against the "Stamp Act," was owing

## The Willing Family

to the influence of the ladies; had I not observed some of the proceedings of your country-men to be such as even humanity itself, much more politeness must detest & abhor! I mean sending threatening letters to Governors, burning them in effigy, breaking into private houses, destroying the furniture & stealing the private property of men doing the duty of their offices. These are crimes horrible in their nature, and quite opposite to the right notion of Liberty: which means an equal protection of Laws, made for the good of the whole.

I as much detest the infamous conduct of the late ignorant administration, as I do the violence of the people in America who were very ill-used in many respects by a bad Steward of the Lord of the Manor, & as the Lord has been generous or foolish enough to trust them too far, they told him they owed him so much they were resolved to raise up a revolt in his own family & ruin the whole together. More prudent & moderate measures would have better become them, & answered their purpose more effectually.

. . . I beg pardon for touching on the subject of politics, but your letter naturally drew me into it.

Your Brother Jim has wrote you by this conveyance & continues the same honest, good-natured, idle, sensible dunce as before. There is no driving literature into him: & as I think his head not hard enough, I will not attempt it with a smith's hammer.

My best wishes attend Mr Francis & your whole family. Pray give my most affectionate love to your Mother and believe me,

ever dear Nancy,

Your sincere friend & coz

THOMAS WILLING

## Recollections

I believe I mentioned before that Anne Willing returned to America with her Father in October 1751. She then entered the society of her native place with more than ordinary advantages. Her Father, one of the most prosperous & valued citizens, herself admired for beauty & for what in those days were thought great accomplishments. The family residence had been established for five or six years in the handsome mansion on Third Street, at the corner of Willing's Alley, one of the most considerable of the day. It seemed well-fitted, even in our own time for a wealthy gentleman. Its portal of Portland stone distinguished it from any other house in the city, and the fine grounds around it almost justified the objection, that it was quite out-of-town, as in those days, I suppose there was nothing west of it. Her handsome Brother, only two years her senior, & devoted to her as ever, was a leader of fashion & a manager of the Assemblies, although a steady man of business. The first letter preserved from her Uncle, speaks of the dresses & ornaments which had been selected for her, some of which may be among those still preserved.

She was only eighteen when she returned to Philadelphia & between that time & her Father's death in 1754 we may well believe her to have been all that her good Uncle thought her.

Her Sister Dorothy, only two years her junior, & generally supposed to have been the most beautiful of the Sisters, was soon ready to share the enjoyments & the admiration bestowed on my Grandmother. She has been described as a most sweet & amiable person; but her fashionable career in this country was short, for she was married when only twenty years of age to Captain Stirling of the British Navy, afterwards Admiral Sir Walter, by which ele-

## The Willing Family

vation she became Lady Stirling. She died in Scotland in 1782 leaving two sons whom I knew in 1830; Sir Walter Stirling, Baronet & M. P., Admiral Charles Stirling and a daughter, who was married to her cousin Mr Andrew Stirling of Dumpelier and was the Mother of one of my kindest friends, Mr Walter Stirling.

Captain Stirling, who arrived with his ship in Philadelphia in November 1752, seems to have been immediately captivated by her charms; but the engagement was at first opposed on account of his roving profession & want of means. I presume Charles Willing never consented to it, for I find from my papers the date of her marriage, October 1755, was nearly a year after his death.

We have no means of knowing the style of Charles Willing's establishment; but we may infer, from his personal popularity and the Civic Honours bestowed on him, that his house was the scene of liberal hospitality. In some of the Reminiscences preserved by Watson, I find it mentioned that he brought with him from England a 'Caleche Coach.' Chief Justice Allen's being the only other one of the sort in the city.

I infer, from a letter of my Grandmother that she was a good horse-woman, & had every opportunity to enjoy what is certainly the most healthful of all pleasures for the young. There is evidence in a letter I shall quote, of her great taste for gardening, & a country-seat purchased by her Father on Tacony Creek, probably the present site of the United States Arsenal, was her especial pride & delight.

At this time, James Hamilton filled the place of Governor & received at his fine residence at Bush Hill, all the best society of the Colony, & all the strangers of distinction of whom we find mention as occasional visitors. Among

## Recollections

other references to his hospitality, I may quote the following from the Shippen correspondence under date of November 8th, 1752: "To-morrow all the gentlemen of the town are to drink his Majesty's health at Bush Hill, and after dinner they are to wait upon the ladies in town & conduct them to the State-House to a Ball in the Assembly-Room, & after a dance or two, all hands are to go upstairs." This is "the great entertainment" mentioned by Watson who says that each loyal Toast was announced by the "Association Battery" at Wicaco.

In the evening there was a grand Ball, surpassing all former ones in brilliancy, at the State-House, & his Honour gave a supper there in the long gallery. His Honour was, of course, the Governor, as the Mayor whose dignity is generally so characterized, was at that time a Quaker, Benjamin Shoemaker, who, if not restrained by the principles or penuriousness of his sect, would have been checked by the fear of ecclesiastical censure; for to a very late period, within the writer's recollection, even the hospitalities of a wedding dinner were measured & watched by ex-officio supervisors.

There can be no doubt but that the Misses Willing were leading belles at this brilliant entertainment. Governor Hamilton is often mentioned in letters as their intimate acquaintance and with him began a family friendship, hereditary on my Mother's side of the house, which through his representatives, the posterity of his Brother Andrew has continued to the present day. In an account of my Father's family I have noted their confidential relations with Governor Hamilton's Father, Andrew, the eminent lawyer.

Governor Hamilton died a bachelor, his life being prolonged to the close of our revolutionary war. I think I

## The Willing Family

may say that of all our provincial officers he was the most popular and respected. Equally trusted by the Lord Proprietors and the people, he had a large fortune for those days and dispensed it liberally. He was, according to my recollection of West's full length picture of him, a short stout man with a handsome, full, but not ruddy face; altogether in dress and air, personifying the dignity of his station. I once was dressed in some of his embroidered habiliments brought down by his great-niece when our first Fancy-Ball was under discussion. They were then a "world too wide" for me, & tarnished & moth-eaten; so I did not think of strutting as the representative of our much respected Governor!

The beautiful and well-preserved brocade of my Grandmother, which may perhaps have been worn by her at the very Ball of which I have just spoken, has come down to me. It has been worn by two of my daughters [and Granddaughter] and has been much admired.

The State-House rooms, especially the long gallery in the second story, were in those days occasionally used for public Balls. An invitation from the "Gentlemen of the Army" printed on the back of a playing card, was found some years ago among the papers of the Jekylls, begging "the favour of her company to a Ball at the State-House on Monday, September 22nd, 1755." The invitations to the City Assemblies were written on the backs of playing-cards, & signed by two of the Managers. I have had several signed by John Inglis and Thomas Willing, who, dating from the inauguration of these Balls, were managers for many years.

When the earliest Dancing Assemblies were held I have not ascertained. Late in the century, the large rooms at the

## Recollections

City Tavern, recollect ed by many as the Merchant's Coffee House, on the west side of Second Street, south of the Bank of Pennsylvania, was so used, & in one of these hung the full length portrait of John Inglis, painted by request of the Subscribers in 1770, by Charles Wilson Peale. A special honour, suggested, no doubt, by those who had seen the portrait of Beau Nash in the Assembly Rooms at Bath, and one which at the same time indicated some especial claims to the respect and gratitude of the beau-monde as the presiding officer of their festivities.

He was the Great-Grandfather of my wife. He was a Scotch merchant who settled in Philadelphia where he married Miss McCall. He had numerous descendants; but my wife & her off-spring are his only representatives in Philadelphia.

After my marriage, I enquired after the picture, which I recollect ed seeing some years before in its unshorn honours, hanging in the ware-rooms of an upholsterer; but it had been sold to a gilder who had used the richly-carved frame & cut down the portrait to its bust. Its face was again looking down from the same walls, but on very different objects: for the first dancing hall had now been turned into the lumber room of an Auctioneer.

Thus strangely was it rescued from the oblivion into which the aristocracy & fashion of the last century had long ago passed. I bought it as it now is for five dollars, presented it to his Granddaughter, Mrs Middleton, & have it now again in my possession at Alverthorpe.

Let not my readers sneer at my picture of primitive habits in a community in which there existed so few of the Arts which aid luxury. The invitation written on the back of a playing card was "le suprême Bon-ton" in those days.

## The Willing Family

I have had several of that style inviting to the most distinguished houses. A simpler usage, which my old friend, Miss Roberts, told me of, & which seems to have descended to a pretty late day, was by verbal invitation, delivered personally by Dolby, the sexton of Christ Church, who, no doubt, filled the same place in our village community that the magnificent Brown of Grace Church does now among the fashionables of New-York. I suppose the conductor of funerals could put aside his solemn air, & adopt the guise of pleasure's harbinger, & as such, be welcomed like the winged Mercury of the Vrow Van Tassel, so vividly pictured by Washington Irving.

At the Ball given by the Gentlemen of the Army in September 1755, the beautiful Anne & Dolly Willing were no doubt missed by their admirers; for their Father had died only ten months before, in November 1754. By his will, he gave his mansion house & by much the largest portion of his fortune to his eldest son, made a moderate provision for his other children, & settled on his wife the interest of £3,600, currency, about \$500 per annum, with some of his furniture, with a request that she might occupy his mansion house for seven years at a rent of £50 per annum.

As his death was sudden, it may be he calculated on a short survivorship, for we cannot believe he would have so meanly provided for a most excellent and devoted Wife.

The Governor's grand entertainment, the King's Ball in 1754, (Watson gives Hamilton's King's Ball as 1752, & Governor Morris's Ball as 1754) was a rare occurrence, sufficing at least for the season, & no doubt still talked of when the Gentlemen of the Army gave their great Ball at the State-House, in September 1755. I have already stated that the Misses Willing could not have attended the latter.

## Recollections

Before passing from the subject of our dancing Assemblies, which under all regimes & all influences, seem to have preserved their reputation for the select & elegant society they brought together, I would state that in those days they probably in a great measure, took the place of private Balls & were given as often at least as once a fortnight. The annual subscription to them in 1754 would appear from the Shippen correspondence to have been £3 currency, and I may add that at that time subscription Concerts, given probably on the alternate weeks were also supported, for which the Subscription was £4 per annum.

There were then but few families rich enough to support their youth in idleness, & there were no resources of literature or art for those to whom even lucrative employments prove irksome.

Cards or the pleasures of the table were the chief social recreations of the evening for the older men & the waltzing gentleman, a youth without employment, was regarded as on the high-road to ruin.

I refer for all this, to a very good letter of advice from my Grandmother's Uncle [Shippen] to his Son Edward, afterwards Chief Justice, written this very year 1754.

As to the young ladies, shopping was not as yet a daily avocation, and as all the Beaux worth meeting, were at their farms or country houses, our Grandmothers had no temptation to a full-dress promenade. The requirements of health, the claims of charity, or family affection were not neglected; but these alone stopped the current of daily household industry, varied by such studies as might be prompted by individual tastes.

One of Thomas Willing's letters from London, leads us to suppose that his niece had written to him of her garden

## The Willing Family

in town as a subject of interest. A letter of her own, now to be copied, gives us our first idea of her in country life. It was written on July 18th, 1754, to her Brother Thomas, then at Albany in attendance on the General Congress of the Colonies, where he acted as the Secretary of the Delegates from Pennsylvania. The farm at Tacony which their Father then owned was, according to Richard P. Lardner, the property now occupied by the United States as an Arsenal, & the house is, or was, lately still standing. The letter is, I am sorry to say, the last to her Brother which has been preserved. She thus writes:

*Tachony, July 18th, 1754.*

**T**HE post is come in & no news from my dear Brother! What can be the reason? I hope the want of opportunity is the only excuse for your silence to your friends who so impatiently wait to hear from or to see you! Had you taken a voyage to sea, we might as often have heard from you as we have from Albany! I assure you the time passes very tediously. We all mourn your absence & rejoice only in the hope of your quick return to us!

My Father has been a little indisposed for a week or ten days past, which being very uncommon, made us the more uneasy: but, thank God! he is quite recovered!

I believe he is writing to you & also my Sister: to their letters I refer you for news. Tachony affords none that can be entertaining to you: but still I must say some few words of a place that I am grown so fond of. Since we have been here it has gained great credit "and what for" no doubt you will say — 't is no less than its being a healthy situation! Mrs Apowen & Sukey Lloyd declare in their countenances as well as by words, that they are quite hearty & well since

## Recollections

their arrival here. Mamma & the two little children with your Patience have grown mere country folks & methinks in that style this is wrote.

We have had a Dutch gardener here these six weeks past; but the night before last, discharged him in order to take a French one who lived with John Lawrence. I believe he is a very clever fellow for the employment. He is to have eighteen pounds when done, for his labour, with John to help him & this we think very cheap. So now we have the prospect of having a pretty garden this Fall. The rye harvest is over well, but the Farmers quake for fear of the wheat. This damp, rainy weather will mildew a great deal, & moreover, will take off some of the diversions of a country life; but still, there are so many left that I am loth to quit it. My Father talks of building a milk-house, & making your Sis the mistress of it! Moreover, we are to have a piazza before the door where, if you'll give us the opportunity, we'll treat you to the best country fare!

All this is very pleasant, but how long it will last, God only knows! The French, who are now at Ohio, may soon disconcert all our plans & destroy all our enjoyments! The melancholy news is just arrived of the loss of sixty men, belonging to Colonel Washington's Company who were killed on the spot, & of the Colonel & the Half-King [?] being taken prisoners; all owing to the obstinacy of Washington, who would not wait for the arrival of re-inforcements. This is a shocking tale and must damp the spirits of every one of us. 'T is to be hoped that the Treaty may be of service, else we shall certainly be undone.

Everybody is making the anxious enquiry—"What is doing at Albany?" But nobody can answer that question. Do gratify their curiosity as soon as possible!

## The Willing Family

The long letters from town & this by no means short one, will perhaps take up too much of your time; but if this does intrude a little, attribute it to your own request, & a Sister's inclination to converse as much as possible with so good & kind a Brother—therefore, excuse it!

Mamma desires to convey her sincere love & hopes you'll take great care of her eldest Son, in which request, I most ardently join.

Pray make our compliments to Mr Penn & any other gentlemen who may do us the honour of enquiring after our health. I am going to send this to town & hope it will not be too late for the post. It was so with my last letter or you would have heard from her, who is "most sincerely,

Your affectionate friend and Sister,

A. WILLING"

This is the only reference by herself to her country life before her marriage, and, in fact, the only mention of her Father's farm at Tachony. We are led to suppose that "the farm" was purchased after the date of his Will and a few months before his death, which occurred on the 30th of November following the date of the letter.\*

That my Grandmother had some years after this a country retreat, we find from a letter which I shall give hereafter written to her by Colonel Bouquet under date of September 1759. He writes, "You give a description of your retreat that awakes the strong inclinations I always had for a country life. Few people are so well qualified to enjoy all the sweets of it." And we may therefore suppose that the gardens which we find her planting five years before, were

\*Charles Willing died November 30th, 1754 just four months after the date of this letter. J. F. F.

## Recollections

then yielding fruits & flowers, & all the pure & refined enjoyments of country life. After her marriage, we shall note her interested in all agricultural matters, the crops, the dairy, the cattle & flocks on her Husband's farms & in all these sharing his tastes & studying his pleasure.

The death of Charles Willing in November 1754, was a more than common affliction. He had been a kind & affectionate Father, & particularly devoted to his eldest daughter. He was too, in the vigour of health, & at the age of 44, there seemed to be a career before him of honour, usefulness & prosperity, which all his family would have shared. His estate, although estimated by his Son at £20,000 sterling—would have been an indifferent provision for a Widow & nine Children, if divided according to modern ideas. But Charles Willing was an Englishman and had the notions of his countrymen. He was probably right in his opinion that the family consequence, which would be reflected on all his Children, could be best secured by giving his mansion and the bulk of his estate to his eldest Son. That Son was a worthy imitator of his Father's thrift, & more than sustained his civic honours. He accumulated a fortune amounting to \$800,000, & certainly was one of the most important & respected citizens of Philadelphia.

His Mother, however, had only a small annuity, the interest of £3,600 currency, some furniture, & a permission to remain in the mansion House for seven years, at a rent of £50. We can hardly believe that her Husband could have calculated the result. At the end of that time, she went into a poor dwelling on Pine Street, where her wretched annuity, paid for a time in depreciated currency, would not support her. Her younger Children, whilst they remained

## The Willing Family

unmarried, by sharing her expenses, supplemented her economies, & her married Daughters were able to supply many comforts. Her eldest Son, did not, it seems, think right to reflect upon his Father by adding to his Mother's income, & was not prodigal of attentions to the poor old lady, whose death in October, 1791, is referred to in a letter of his, in my possession, with no particular evidence of respect or regret, & yet, I have never heard her spoken of, by those who knew her but with tender affection, & her sweet and gentle disposition, made her interesting even in poverty & deafness till she had almost completed her 81st year.

For seven years or more, the Widow of Charles Willing & her Children lived together. Of these years we have but few records.

The beautiful Dorothy was married to Captain Stirling in October, 1755. Mary married the Hon. William Byrd of Westover, Virginia, in January 1761. Anne married Tench Francis in February, 1762. And finally Thomas Willing married Anne McCall in June 1763.

When his Mother left the home of her married & widowed life, she took with her the younger daughters, Abigail & Margaret, leaving their sister Elizabeth, with her brother, with whom she remained for six years, until her marriage with Samuel Powel.

The first of these marriages was one of those natural & common occurrences that need no explanation. Captain Stirling had already distinguished himself in the command of the Essex, man-of-war, under Lord Howe in his expedition against Cherbourg, when the Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of York, had been placed under his care. He came to Philadelphia with his honours fresh upon him, & soon captivated the blooming Dorothy. He seemed to have the chances

## Recollections

of rapid promotion; but as is intimated in one of the letters of Mr Thomas Willing, he was afterwards unfortunate in his Commanders, and shared their disappointments.

It was not 'till the time of our Revolutionary War, that he had better luck under Admirals Lord Keppel & Romney, and after the capture of St Eustatia from the Dutch in 1781, he at last received the honours of knighthood. He subsequently had command of the Fleet at the . . . and on the occasion, it is said, of George the Third's reviewing his Squadron, was offered a Baronetcy, which he declined. He had no one then to share his honours. His lovely wife was recently dead! The Peerage informs us that his claims for gallant service were afterwards recognised by conferring the Baronetcy on his eldest son, Walter.

His roving professional life, through a period of such active service, separated him constantly from his wife, who, it appears, was not compensated by the kindness of her husband's family, & the society of her own English relations, for the absence of all she had loved in childhood. She remained, indeed, nearly four years after her marriage, in Philadelphia, where her eldest son was born, & whom she left under the care of her family when she went to England. He was here 'till I think his eighth or ninth year, much of his time being spent at Westover with his Aunt, Mrs Byrd, a woman well fitted to direct his early education.

I knew him in England, in 1831, and heard him speak of the old house in Third Street; but still more of Westover, which he described as an abode of princely opulence. The constant hospitality, the equipages, with four horses, & postillions & outriders—everything which could delight a boy, seemed exaggerated in the recollections of an old man!

## The Willing Family

Sir Walter, his Father, died in 1786, and his wife four years before, in Scotland, far from her family, the separation from whom was aggravated by the war against her native country, in which her husband & second son, both served. This second son, Charles, entered the Navy early & rose to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the White. He was a very gallant officer, and only missed higher distinction through some act of negligence for which he was put on the shelf. He once fought a duel which grew out of his having mounted a horse with his spurs upsidedown, & his insisting that this was the right way to wear them!

He was already a Captain & in command of a Sloop-of-war in 1781, when his vessel was captured and himself taken prisoner, after an obstinate engagement by the *Congress*, a Philadelphia privateer. By special favour, he was permitted to change the place of his imprisonment for the homes of his kinsfolk, much to their joy & his! From motives of prudence, he was sent by them to Lancaster, where his more distant relatives received him at their houses, where he met Judge Yeates who described him as “a sensible, agreeable young man; but rather stiff in his politics.” I knew him also in 1831, when he occupied a charming Villa near Chelsea, a kind old sailor of the most decided professional type. He was described as an officer of great gallantry.

His elder brother, Walter, entered into business as a merchant and banker, was twice in Parliament for the rotten borough of Gattan and St Ives, and high Sheriff of Kent in 1804. He was Fellow of the Royal & Antiquarian Societies, & altogether a man of some consequence in his day. As a politician, he supported Mr Pitt by his votes & his money, & perhaps the honour of the Baronetcy was ac-

## Recollections

corded as much to these services, as to his Father's Naval exploits!

But when I knew him in 1831, his honours & his importance were much curtailed. His Bank had failed in the great commercial disasters of previous years. He no longer held his seat in Parliament and his fine house, which had been famed for its hospitalities, was exchanged for apartments in the court-yard of the Albany, where he invited me several times to breakfast, after the old Scotch fashion; when his table was spread with all the delicacies we read of in Sir Walter Scott's novels, and with many relics of his ancient splendour.

His walls were covered with family pictures, among which his Mother's family had many representatives; but I do not remember them now. Only the kind, genial hospitality of the old gentleman & his cordial recognition of a common blood. He was equally pleased with myself, to talk over family matters, & exhibited the objects of art he still possessed, & various articles of virtue, which evidenced his antiquarian tastes. But I never heard of or perceived, the scientific attainments, which entitled him to a place in the Royal Society!

The apartments he occupied were the most important in the court, the centre of the quadrangle, a house by itself. I accompanied him also to his pew in the upper gallery at St James's Church where I found myself surrounded by a most aristocratic congregation; liveried and powdered servants ranged in long files along the aisles, ready to open the doors & carry the large prayer-books, gilt with armorial bearings! The church itself, was of the tasteless style of the Hanoverian dynasty—the rest, all high & dry; a dull preacher and no candles on the Altar.

## The Willing Family

Sir Walter died in August 1832, whilst I was still in Europe. His son and heir, the present Sir Walter, who married a daughter of Lord Stafford, seemed to me a pretentious little fellow, with few good qualities to redeem his insignificance. He called on me in 1857, but I did not see him, nor regretted it at all. He had children & his sisters were married to men of some civic rank; but I refer to the "Baronetage" for all that I have ever heard of them, & that all not worth repeating.

The only daughter of my great-Aunt, Anne, married her cousin, Mr Andrew Stirling of Dumpelier, who boasted, at least his son did, that he was head of the Clan, & alone of his name, entitled to bear supporters to his coat-of-arms. I knew a number of their children. William, the eldest, a very handsome man, who died a bachelor. He was described to me as a person of ability & attainments; but when I knew him, he was dying by inches, from a spine complaint, which affected successively & by slow degrees, every limb with paralysis, beginning with his feet, till his head alone seemed to retain vitality & intelligence. He read & conducted business when he could not move a hand. I was told that his mind still found expression in his eyes, when his mouth could no longer utter his thoughts.

The second brother was Walter, also a bachelor. He had been in America to visit his Grandmother's family, whilst I was still in my childhood, & he became a special favourite of all his kinsfolk, especially of my Grandmother, of whom he retained a most affectionate & pleasing recollection. He constantly corresponded with my Uncle & Aunt Harrison, & afterwards with myself, until his death.

In each of my visits to Europe he was particularly kind & useful to me, carrying me everywhere in London, where

## Recollections

he always resided, & to all its environs, from Greenwich to Richmond Hill; & introducing me to his Scotch relations, who, for his sake, received me most hospitably. Among them I may name, Captain Cyril Thornton, & Sir William Hamilton, the learned professor at Edinborough.

At my second visit to England, he resided in Curzon Street, Mayfair, & entertained constantly a rather distinguished circle of friends, to some of whom I was presented. He came to take leave of my family at Southampton when I was about to return to America & is since dead.

If I write an account of my visits to Europe, which I purpose doing, should life be spared me, I shall have much more to say of my kind cousin Walter, whose miniature I possess, & of whose letters, I have many large packages.

His other Brothers were John, who married Elizabeth Willing daughter of Mr Thomas Mayne Willing, since dead; Admiral Sir James Stirling—Charles & Edward, all of whom I knew. His Sisters were Mrs Halsey, Lady Hume, the wife of Sir James Hume, Bart., Agnes and Dorothy; a remarkably handsome family, most of them now dead.

The landed estate of their Father in Scotland had been very large, but he was a Glasgow merchant & failed in the crash which followed the return to specie payments after the great French War, & but a small portion of their ancestral acres descended to his children. They, however, retained 'till the reform bill of 1832, their seigneurial rights in a Scotch county, when the body of the inhabitants had no suffrage. Less than one hundred votes were, I believe, all that were numbered in the return. The county was always contested by the Duke of Hamilton & Lord Douglas, & my cousins, who could give six or eight votes, &

## The Willing Family

sided with the latter, had all his influence in their favour when they sought places, which many of them did, in the public service.

Commissions & promotion in the Army & Navy, places under the East India Company, were easily procured when Lord Douglas & the Member from . . . shire, supported the Ministry: but the Reform Bill put an end to all that. The number of the family, however, in the civil & Naval services is still very great.

Some discovery of minerals on the fragments remaining of their estate, made my cousin Walter a rich man. And his carriages, liveries, picture-frames & silver, displaying all his heraldic emblazonments would have seemed matters of very vulgar pride in anyone but an old Scotch gentleman.

He sent me a Quarto volume prepared by the great pedigree lawyer of Edinborough, Mr Liddell; prepared, I dare say, at a cost of hundreds of pounds, all to prove that the family of Dumpelier had precedence over the Stirlings of Keir, with the right to the leopards, dogs or goats, that supported their armorial cognizance of strap & buckles. These were ostentatiously displayed on carriages, picture-frames, screens, & wherever they could be squeezed in, & when my attention was called to them by my good cousin, I could not help smiling, although I trust, I veiled from him my expression. No one, I presume, but a Scotchman would have placed on such things so great a value.

It was in 1759 that Captain Stirling took his wife Dorothy with him to England; a great affliction to herself & to all her family. My Grandmother attended her in September of that year to the Capes of Delaware, and took, what I suppose proved, a last farewell; for I have no notice of her return.

## Recollections

The next of the Sisters who left the family home, made what was considered, in point of fortune, the most brilliant match in America. Mary Willing was married by the Rev: Doctor Peters on the 29th of January, 1761, to the Hon: William Byrd of Westover, Virginia, one of the Governor's Council, & holding the commission of Colonel in the Royal American Army. The acquaintance was, without doubt, made when he visited Philadelphia, on his way to take command of his regiment in Western Pennsylvania: . . . local jealousy & ambition seemed to take offence, but General, afterwards Lord Amherst, did not consult their prominent . . .

Mr Edward Shippen speaks of him as a fine gentleman & a soldier, & there is every reason to suppose him a person of varied accomplishments & a most generous disposition. My Great-Aunt was twenty years old at the time of her marriage. Her husband was a widower with five children; his first wife having been Elizabeth Hill Carter, daughter of John Carter of Shirley, who was the son of Robert Carter of . . . commonly called King Carter, a man of immense wealth, his mother, a daughter of Sir Edward Hill, by which marriage he gained the estate of Shirley. The sons by this first marriage, several of whom were in the British Army have, I think, left no male descendants of their name. The only daughter, Elizabeth, married Major Farley of the British Army, a native of Antigua where he had estates.

She was early left a widow, with one daughter, & was married, subsequently to the Rev: Mr Dunbar, & to Colonel Skipwith.

Her daughter, of whom more will be said in another place, had also three husbands: first, Mr Bannister, of Virginia; second, Thomas Lee Shippen, Father of Doctor Shippen; and third, General George Izard.

## The Willing Family

Colonel Byrd was thirty-three years old at the time of his marriage to Mary Willing.

He had been educated in England, & spent some time in London in the highest society, where in spite of his great wealth, he involved his estate in heavy debts, being not only a spendthrift but a gambler! He is said to have risked & lost £10,000 sterling, on a single game of cards!

His Mother, who was a great English heiress, Miss Maria Taylor, shared with a Sister, estates contiguous to Kensington, now covered by a million of souls!

She was foolishly indulgent, & if she did not live to witness his ruin, must have seen its approach, for she seems to have survived some years, his second marriage. My Grand-Aunt speaks of her in her letters, with affection as a kind & indulgent Mother.

In one, written soon after her arrival at her Husband's home in Westover she describes Mrs Byrd as "a most sensible, cheerful woman, always gay & amiable!" and writing of her own Husband's children, says: "Otway (the youngest of his children) is as kind & good-natured as a lamb, but not pretty; the other, of good disposition & well-behaved, & the handsomest child I ever saw! I am like to have no trouble with either."

After descanting on the luxuries from the river & the garden, and the other appliances of wealth, she resumes: "This is the most delightful place in the world. The house is elegant & convenient with a vast number of out-houses which I have not yet counted, & fine gardens. The library would delight you. It contains a fine collection of books in cases; the room very long—ten couples might dance in it very well—& there is a fine spinet & harpsichord. I hope to bring Abby down with me when next I come from

## Recollections

Philadelphia, by which time I hope she will be a Mistress of Music!"

She makes no reference to the pictures which certainly must have been the chief ornament of the mansion. They were indeed, chiefly portraits; but one or more of them were by Vandyke, & a number of them by Sir Godfrey Kneller; some, members of the family, others, supposed to have been friends of the second Colonel Byrd, comprised several of the most distinguished of the nobility & wits of England. I shall append a catalogue of them which I have from Miss Lucy Harrison, &c, of which I furnished a copy to Mr Tuckerman for his forthcoming account of American Art, & collections of Art, in which I hope to find it in print.

The Marquis de Chastellux, who visited Westover after Colonel Byrd's death, describes it as surpassing all the fine places he had already seen, & praised the magnificence of the buildings & the beauty of the situation as seen from the opposite bank of the river, rising above terraced gardens! "It has," he says, "the appearance of a small town, & forms a most delightful prospect." I shall hereafter refer to the account he gives of its mistress.

In her next, to my Grandmother, she speaks of a visit to Belvidere, another seat of Colonel Byrd's on the site of Richmond, & which is particularly described in the travels of the Rev: Mr Burnaby, who visited it in . . . To quote Mrs Byrd's letter: "We are now at Chatsworth, a very agreeable place. Mrs Randolph is extremely like Aunt Shippen in her behaviour, with the addition of a very good heart, & I luckily am a favourite with her, for I shall often see her on my way to Belvidere, our seat in Richmond. Colonel Byrd has a most noble estate in that part of the country; a great part of Richmond is his, & two other

## The Willing Family

pretty towns, entirely his, that are only divided from it by a most beautiful river. The navigation is stopped by the rocks, which create a fine falls. Add to this all are obliged to come to that market who have farms above the falls; so that he received a duty upon every hogshead of tobacco that is landed there. All the houses are his, & he is continually building more; for it is a place of so much trade, that if he had three houses where he now has one, they would be all let, I imagine, in a little time."

Continuing, in the same letter, she says: "My Mother Byrd is very fond of me. She is the only person I dare open my heart to. They are all Brothers, Sisters, or Cousins; so that if you use one person in the Colony ill, you affront all; except the Governor's family, & my Mother."

The letters I have quoted are of the first year of her marriage, and the only ones preserved, which were written during her husband's life. There is most of a missing one from Williamsburg, where Colonel Byrd had a residence used when he attended the Provincial Court & Assembly, as one of the Governor's Council. Here she met the society of all that was distinguished in Virginia, at a time of great interest & excitement preceding the Revolutionary War. But all the honours of Provincial rank, all the luxuries of her splendid estate, all the parade of equipage did not wean her from her attachment to her family, or her preference for her native place; & her generous Husband, disposed to indulge her affections to the utmost, built a fine house on a lot contiguous to her Father's house on Third Street, although it could have been occupied only at intervals for a few months, perhaps weeks at a time, from 1762 to 1764. In the latter year it was sold to Chief-Justice Allen, who in 1766, conveyed it as a gift to his Daughter, the

## Recollections

wife of John Penn, the son of Richard Penn, the last Provincial Governor.

The house on Third Street was built by Colonel Byrd on property which was part of his wife's inheritance.

After its occupancy by Governor Penn for four years, he sold it to Chief-Justice Benjamin Chew, whose widow and daughters lived in it within my own recollection.

It was of its kind, a fine mansion; apparently about 40 feet front, on a lot of 60 feet. The hall & parlours were wainscotted & panelled with figures in heavy carvings, & the panels were filled with pictures. It was all very gloomy & dirty, as I remember it, but it was everything that wealth & provincial art could make it, in the day it was built.

It may be entertaining to my lady readers to have the only reference to dress which I have found in Mrs Byrd's letters to my Grandmother. She mentions an order for dresses which had been sent in 1762 to her Sister, Mrs Stirling, & amongst other things, a dress of point-lace, of which for the lace alone, she had limited her in cost to seventy guineas! She desires my Grandmother to purchase for her a robe of green mantua, or paduasoy, & have it trimmed with white ribbon, to be made by Sally Clifton, who was, we may presume, the fashionable dressmaker of the day, but not to be *seen* or *spoken of*, & the imported dresses, not to be opened, unless her Sister "should have an inclination to see them herself."

We are thus left to draw our notions of dress & living from very few materials, for the correspondence has many gaps. Indeed, Mrs Byrd writes that she only received & despatched letters once a week by sending a boy nine miles every Friday.

From any letters or memoranda in my possession, I am

## The Willing Family

not aware that Mrs Byrd ever visited Philadelphia after she had given up her residence on Third Street. As the postal communication was so defective, we may infer that there was no public convenience for travellers, & a journey for so great a lady was no small affair. Sir Walter Stirling spoke to me of his Aunt's travelling in her carriage & four with outriders & an "avant-courier" to see that the roads were unobstructed, & that due notice was given of her approach to the friends at whose houses she expected to lodge.

Her numerous children, & she had eight within sixteen years of married life, rendered her home on James River, a permanent residence. Her Husband died in 1777, & the Civil War that raged, made the protection of her interests that were centered there, a primary duty.

Her estates were visited by the hostile armies, & those contributions enforced by either side, which civilised warfare regards as justifiable. I have no tradition of the wholesale plunder of private houses the destruction of granaries & crops, which disgraced our more recent Civil War, & which should render infamous, Generals, whose chief boast seems to have been that they burned & plundered & drove the miserable inhabitants of the South to the swamps & the wilderness!

Lord Cornwallis visited Westover, & hospitalities which might have been enforced, were accorded with such grace as would win every mitigation of the necessary exactions levied by a nobleman on a widowed lady.

After some of the battles in the neighbourhood, wounded officers of the British Army were brought to her house, & were nursed with humanity & kindness; perhaps they may have been comrades of her Husband and his older Sons; none of whom remained in the service of the King. These

## Recollections

acts of charity were misrepresented to the American Authorities. No doubt there were men ready to make my Aunt's courtesy & humanity a pretence for confiscation. But in those days, she knew she would appeal to *gentlemen* in power, & it is said she answered the accusation by giving her immediate presence at Richmond or Williamsburg, where she drove in her own carriage, & presenting herself before the Assembly, or the Court, so effectually defended her conduct & proved her loyalty to her Country, that every charge was at once dismissed, & she returned to her family to be no further molested.

This anecdote is referred to by Chastellux, who mentions that her estates were three times invaded by the English forces, but that she was still able to maintain her generous style of living. At the time the French Marquis visited her, she was a woman of two & forty. He speaks of her agreeable countenance & great sense, her admirable management of her estates, her kindness to her negroes, being herself their physician & nurse in sickness, & of her having made some valuable discoveries in the healing art, particularly in those diseases incident to their race. He refers to the great losses arising from her Husband's conduct; but adds, that her care and activity, had in some measure repaired the effects of his dissipation, & that her house was still the most celebrated & agreeable of the neighbourhood.

The affliction of Mrs Byrd on the death of her Husband was unbounded, & with the loss of an object of such just affection & pride, came a long series of misfortunes from the disasters of War & the pressure of debts. In his will, Colonel Byrd gives evidence of his own suffering from this cause, which must for some time have been very great. He writes: "As to the remaining part of the estate it pleased

## The Willing Family

God to bestow, through my own folly and inattention to accounts, the carelessness of some employed in the management thereof, & the villainy of others, it is still greatly encumbered with debt, which embitters every moment of my life."

His Wife, with a better spirit, undertook the management of the inheritance & determined to preserve at least for her children, the home where they were born, & some portion of their ancestral fortune, after the payment of every just obligation, & the satisfaction of those most unjustly termed, debts of honour.

To secure this object, she held to her right of dower, & by admirable management, extinguished one claim after another, as she could dispose of the lands in England & this Country. In the great disorder & depression that followed the Peace, this was a matter of great difficulty ; but the removal of the seat of Government from Williamsburg to Richmond, gave special value to all the lots that remained in or about the new city.

Mrs Byrd procured an Act of Assembly to sell them as prizes in a lottery, & I have long ago seen tickets which her relations in Philadelphia held, & which I suppose drew Blanks ! She also sent the fine library to auction & it was sold in Philadelphia, I presume, at a great sacrifice. The catalogue is among the McKensie books given to the Philadelphia Library, & many of the volumes are still to be found not only in that collection but in private hands.

I have several with the elaborately quartered book-plate.

The finest part of the family silver was also sold. I believe that many pieces might yet be found. An epergne & a very beautiful cake basket were bought by John Brown of Providence. I have seen these in the possession of his

## Recollections

grandson, Governor Francis, from whom I believe, they have passed to *his* granddaughter, Mrs Marshall Woods.

The library is said to have been collected by the second Colonel Byrd, a man of great accomplishments & of eminent ability. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, President of the Governor's Council, & held other high offices. "The Byrd Papers," as they are called—privately printed—were his production.

The widow of his son, sustained the family name & social rank till the time of her death in 1814, when Westover, too great an estate for any of her children, was sold & passed into other hands.

The furniture & pictures were distributed; most of them at Brandon on the James River, the seat of Benjamin Harrison, who married Evelyn, the second daughter of Colonel Byrd by his second marriage. These were happily removed with most of the objects of value in the beginning of the late Civil War, before the advent of Beast Butler & other patriots of his order. The houses of all the gentlemen on the James River were well searched for plunder, ancient furniture, & family papers carried off & their gardens laid waste; but I believe the mansions still stand in the midst of general desolation. It was reserved for the invaders of South Carolina to burn & raze every ancient dwelling & destroy every trace of a previous possession by a cultivated aristocracy.

I have heard a great deal of my Great-Aunt from those who visited Westover in the last thirty years of her life, & upon all of these a strong impression was made by her singular intelligence, her dignity, and kindness of heart. There are many who still remember her, & as long as there is any traditional memorial of the place & the family, the

## The Willing Family

last Mrs Byrd will be named as perhaps the most worthy & honoured of all the occupants of Westover.

I possess about a dozen letters written by her to my Grandmother, to whom she seems to have been devotedly attached, & for whose accomplishments she ever expressed the most singular admiration ; but if Mrs Byrd had not her advantages in education, she was probably her superior in intellect & force of character.

Her first letters exhibit an almost child-like wonder & delight at the princely establishment of which she found herself the mistress. But the trials of life seemed to brighten & enlarge her intelligence, & her later letters are remarkable for sense as well as feeling, & even in their composition discover great literary improvement.

Miss Lucy Harrison says that her Grandmother was a God-daughter of Dr Franklin, who took some pains with her literary improvement & sent for books for her to England. I doubt it all & especially the philosopher's generosity in the last particular. Her position in Virginia, associated her with men much more likely to improve her.

Her children were : Maria Horsmanden Byrd, married to John Page of Page-Brook. They left a numerous family of whom I knew many. The only surviving son, John, who owns Page-Brook, is a most valued friend. His Father, I have always heard spoken of, as prominent in dignity and virtue & his wife was said to be worthy of him.

Second : Anne Willing Byrd, who died single in 1814.

Third : Evelyn Byrd, who married Benjamin Harrison of Brandon, and has numerous descendants still retaining some portion of that noble estate on the James River ; perhaps, after the sale of Westover, the purest specimen of a gentleman's residence in Virginia.

## Recollections

Fourth: Abigail Byrd, married to Judge Nelson, who was a man of great worth & learning, & one of the Professors in William & Mary College, in its days of distinction.

Fifth: Richard Byrd, married first to one of the Harrisons of Brandon, & afterwards to a Miss Wilson, by whom he left children.

Sixth: Charles Byrd, married a Miss Meade, & removed to Ohio where he was afterwards a Judge.

Seventh: Jane Byrd, married Carter Harrison, but left no children.

Eighth: William Byrd, a posthumous child, who married a Miss Lewis, by whom he had a son, Samuel Powel Byrd, who is, I presume, still alive and the only one of the name I ever knew.

Up to our last Civil War, the descendants of my Great-Aunt, maintained their social position, & many of them were highly respected members of society; but none of them were of any political or literary distinction. And now, alas! they must needs sink with the impoverished gentry of Virginia! They will hardly hold the ruined estates which came down to them, & their places will be filled by northern adventurers if indeed, the barbarian masses on whom political rights have been bestowed by the unprincipled party now in power, do not secure possession of these old abodes of refined hospitality, & reduce the whole region to a wilderness, befitting their own brutality.

Whilst her Sisters were occupied with their own love affairs, & their marriages, what was my Grandmother doing? We have no letters of her own or of members of her family, to inform us. And yet, this was one of the most interesting periods of her life; for she had captivated the most accom-

## The Willing Family

plished foreigner who had visited our secluded Province, & it would appear from the series of his letters, which I shall copy hereafter, had admitted him to an intimacy of friendship, which gave him no small hope of success as a lover!

Colonel Bouquet was indeed worthy of her love, & we should almost be justified in condemning her conduct, if we had not proof that their mutual esteem & intimacy were continued after her marriage & until the period of his death. If she had lightly encouraged or heartlessly disappointed the hopes of so high-toned a soldier, we must believe that this could not have been.

The tradition of the family is, that my Grandmother had many lovers, but no one so devoted as Colonel Henry Bouquet. It is even reported that she liked him extremely & would have married him if he would have given up his profession; but that she could not make up her mind to abandon her home & family, & follow the camp; & that he, educated as a soldier, though endowed with the finest tastes & accomplishments, could not throw up his commission in the army & his prospects of promotion, which were almost all he could offer with his hand. The letters of Colonel Bouquet confirm this tradition.

That my Grandmother & he could come to such a cool & rational conclusion after some three years of courtship, may perhaps be accounted for by their age; he being then about forty-two years old & my Grandmother, twenty-eight; a time of life when people can best judge of their own plans & chances of happiness in marriage.

In a memoir by a Mr Dumas, who translated the account of Colonel Bouquet's expedition against the Ohio Indians, & who appears to have been his personal friend, he thus describes him: "Henry Bouquet had a distin-

## Recollections

guished figure, a superior intellect & under a cold & imposing air, a heart of great sensibility. He did not court the good opinion of others which he would not condescend to beg for. You were forced to esteem him and therefore many men of his profession did not think themselves obliged to like him. Firmness, intrepidity, calmness, presence of mind in the greatest dangers ; these virtues so essential in a Commander, were, one might say, natural to him. His presence inspired confidence & commanded respect ; it could give assurance & take it away."

He was born at Rolle in the Canton of Berne, in Switzerland in the year 1719. He entered the Swiss Army as a cadet at the age of 19. Thence he passed into the service of the King of Sardinia & greatly distinguished himself in the war of that Prince against the combined armies of France & Spain. His gallantry was particularly conspicuous at the battle of Coue.

From this service he was called into that of the Prince of Orange & reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the service of the States-General of Holland, commanding a regiment of Swiss Guards.

While in Holland, he had the opportunity of pursuing his studies under some of the most distinguished professors. Hunsterhays (Professor of Greek & Mathematics at Amsterdam & Leyden) and others, & not only in the art of war, but in all branches of learning which could embellish a gentleman.

In an interval of leisure, he travelled in Italy. Becoming known to the British Envoy at The Hague, Sir Joseph Yorke, who reported his great accomplishments to the Duke of Cumberland, he was solicited by him to take the command of a regiment or corps, to be raised for the de-

## The Willing Family

fence of the Colonies, under the designation of the Royal Americans, & accompanied by his friend, Colonel Halde-  
man, they came to America sometime after the year 1755. For his military services in this country, I must refer to our Colonial History, & especially his own printed account of his expedition against the Ohio Indians, with its preface. He was subsequently raised to the rank of Brigadier-General & Commander of the troops in the Southern Colonies. His subsequent career was cut short by his death at Pen-  
sacola in 1765.

In the letters to my Grandmother, some of his earliest military services in America may be traced. They are remarkable compositions for a foreigner, and confirm the report of Mr Dumas that his MS. journals & letters sent out to his friends, inspired such interest & admiration, that they were handed about, & had become so scattered that when they were wanted for his biographical sketch, few or none of them could be found.

The personal esteem in which Colonel Bouquet was held by the first people of this province is shown in almost every reference to him. When Judge Edward Shippen names him in his letters, it is always in such terms as “the good Colonel Bouquet” “a gentleman whom every man must esteem,” etc, etc, and we may surmise that it was at the house of her Uncle at Lancaster, that my Grandmother first saw this gallant soldier. At least we know they must have met there in May 1758: we cannot date their acquaintance farther back.

On the second day of May of that year, Judge Shippen writes to his son-in-law, Colonel James Burd: “I expect Sir John St Clair with Tommy Willing & his sister Nancy to-night.” A council of all the higher officers under Gen-

## Recollections

eral Forbes seems to have been, then & there convened at which the Expedition mentioned in the first letter of Colonel Bouquet was planned, & which resulted in the capture of Fort Du Quesne. The General Forbes to whom Colonel Bouquet gives such high credit did not long live to secure a triumphant peace & the honours which would have accrued to himself. He died in the following March & was buried with great pomp from the old State House.

General Sir Geoffrey Amherst succeeded to his command. Before beginning the campaign, he gave an entertainment to the ladies of Philadelphia, which is described in a letter from Colonel Joseph Shippen, of the date of May 23rd;—“Yesterday the General gave a public breakfast at the Assembly Room. There were forty-two ladies there & many more gentlemen. All danced after breakfast ‘till near two o’clock, & then formed parties with the ladies to Schuykill & Springettsbury.”

It is more than probable that Anne Willing was a guest, & her gallant Colonel in attendance at General Amherst’s “*dejeuner dansant*,” continued so pleasantly on the romantic shores of the Schuykill, in the sweetest season of the year, & ending perhaps with strawberries & cream at the Proprietor’s Villa of Springettsbury, which stood on the spot now occupied by the Preston Retreat, & had flower gardens & shrubbery around it, of which I remember many remains. A wing of the mansion as well as the stables, were standing in my boyhood, & the greenhouse; among other ornamental trees the finest holly I have seen in this neighbourhood.

My children must draw on their imaginations for the romantic incidents which diversified the love of two such very reasonable persons. While not run away with by their

## The Willing Family

passions, we cannot doubt but that they had many pleasant meetings, & that the visits of the Colonel to Philadelphia were always welcomed at the Willing Mansion, where he seems to have shared with all the family, the sincerest friendship. I have but little doubt that her intercourse with so very accomplished a gentleman, may have had some part in cultivating the taste & perfecting the education of his inamorata, the lovely Nancy Willing.

We may imagine many hints for studies carried out in the absence of her lover, & indeed, this must have been the period of her life in which she had the best opportunity for reading, that education which a lively & well-balanced mind owes to the guidance of its own intelligence. There was certainly nothing in the society around her to inspire or encourage any refined taste.

I shall have another occasion to refer to this after presenting the last letter of Colonel Bouquet.

Although his letter preceded but thirteen months the marriage of his dearest Nancy to my Grandfather, his disappointed hopes neither broke his heart, nor terminated their friendly intercourse.

A letter of my Great-Aunt Byrd to her Sister, written in June, 1762, is evidence that the correspondence was still kept up.

She says: "When you next write to Bouquet, give my compliments to him; I shall always remember him with pleasure, for I am sure he is a good creature."

There is something in this phrase which looks like a woman's compassion for a disappointed lover, who could pardon his cruel disappointment & still preserve his hopeless love.

One other circumstance has come down to us.

## Recollections

After the birth of my Uncle John, my Grandparents' eldest Son, Colonel Bouquet gave my Grandmother an exquisitely inlaid carbine or firelock, to be kept for her boy as a souvenir of his Mother's friend. This she had with her at Paradise Farm in 1777, when it was visited by a detachment of the invading army, & a Scotch officer, whose name I do not now recollect, seized the weapon as his prize. My Grandmother entreated him to spare it, as it was a token from a dear friend, then dead, who had been a General in the British Service. But the Scotchman said: "No! No! I must have it. It is the most beautiful thing of the sort I ever saw!" My Aunt, then eight years old, remembered my Grandmother's distress at the time & whenever she spoke of it. With this ends this episode of romantic friendship.

Among other incidents of this raid, my Aunt used to repeat the rather witty speech of a woman then in the service of my Grandmother, who was unfortunately afflicted with great obliquity of vision.

She had been following & watching the pilfering visitors, when one of them, perhaps the very Scotchman above referred to, roared in a rage at her:—"You damned squinting bitch, where were you born?"—"I was born in the entry," said she, "to look both ways to the door."

I know nothing more of Colonel Bouquet. A story was current that he transferred the offer of his hand to my Great-Aunt Powel; that he had been engaged to her, & that by his will he left her his property in Huntingdon County, which she gave to her nephew, Colonel Powel, & which was given by him to his Son, Hare Powel, & was the foundation of his fortune. This in part is, unquestionably, not true.

## The Willing Family

The will of General Bouquet, on record at Philadelphia, makes no mention of my Aunt, but gives some lands to her Brother Thomas, & all the rest of his property in America to his friend & fellow-soldier, Colonel Halderman. I do not believe that after his long engagement to my Grandmother, for whom his love was so appreciative, he could possibly have transferred his affection to a woman so totally dissimilar, as her Sister.

COLONEL BOUQUET TO MISS ANNE WILLING

*Fort Du Quesne, 25th November, 1758.*

DEAR NANCY,

I HAVE the satisfaction to give you the agreeable news of the conquest of this terrible Fort. The French, seized with a Panic at our approach, have destroyed themselves that nest of Pyrates which has so long harboured the murderers & destructors of our poor People. They have burnt and destroyed to the ground their fortifications, houses, and magazines and left us no other cover than the Heavens, a very cold one for an Army without Tents or Equipage. We bear all this hardship with alacrity by the consideration of the immense advantage of the important acquisition.

The Glory of our success must, after God, be allowed to our General, who from the beginning took those wise measures which deprived the French of their chief strength, and by the treaty of Easton kept such a number of Indians idle during the whole Campaign, and procured a peace with those inveterate Enemies more necessary and beneficial to the safety and welfare of the Provinces than the driving the French from the Ohio.

His prudence in all his measures in the numberless difficulties he had to surmount deserves the highest Praises.

## Recollections

I hope that glorious advantage will be improved and this conquest properly supported by speedy and vigorous measures of the Provinces concerned. I wish sincerely for their Interest and happiness they may agree on that Point; but I will not speak Politics to a young Lady.

I hope to have soon the pleasure to see you and give you a more particular account of what may deserve your curiosity: chiefly about the Beauty of this situation which appears to me beyond any description.

Farewell, my dear Nancy. My compliments to the family, and believe me most sincerely,

Your most devoted humble servant,

H. BOUQUET

*Bedford, 17th September, 1759.*

. . . Our Post has been so irregular that I received only a few days ago your kind favour of the 24th August. I was in no hurry to answer it, supposing that you are by this time at the Capes. I shall say nothing of the occasion of that journey.

I know how sensible a sorrow your parting from so dear a sister must have been to you. Poor Dolly! she is gone. My most sincere wishes for her safety and happiness will constantly attend her. You made me very easy in obtaining the positive assurance that she should come back; for I confess that any separation in your family would be a flaw in my happiness.

You give a description of your retreat that awakens the strong inclination I always had for a country life. But few people are so well qualified as my dear Nancy to enjoy all the sweets of it: an easy and cheerful mind open to the agreeable impressions of Natural Beauties: a lively and

## The Willing Family

pliable imagination which you can manage at pleasure and a heart full of the most tender affection for your friends. No wonder that with so many amiable qualities you can make a Paradise of a Solitude! How different is my situation! Continually among a Crowd: but without friends, I can say that I also live in a solitude and of the worst kind.

You are very right to hate war. It is an odious thing. Though if considered in a proper light we could discover many advantages arising from that very calamity. Is it not a fact that a long and uninterrupted Peace corrupts the manners and breeds all sorts of vices? Like a stagnated air we require then the agitation of Winds & even storms to prevent a general infection and to destroy a multitude of insects equally troublesome and dangerous. War banishes Luxury and Effeminacy so contemptible in themselves, and so destructive to society. The necessity of action gives a new spring to our Souls. Real merits & virtues are no longer trampled upon by the arrogant Pride of Wealth & Place. The Prejudice in favour of Birth, Fortune, Rank vanishes. We cease to value People who have nothing more commendable than such frivolous and exterior advantages. We discover their emptiness & esteem them in proportion. I could go further if I were not afraid to shock the tenderness of your Concern for Mankind in General. You would, perhaps, judge it cruel and inhuman to reckon among the advantages to be derived from War, the destruction of beings who by their vices or circumstances would be a nuisance to Society. I suppose it was upon that principle that the most shocking scenes of barbarity, including the scalping of your Inhabitants, were not much lamented by some of your own People, who are charged

## Recollections

to have said that it was no great matter if a parcel of such Wretches were swept away. It is true enough that numbers of the Inhabitants of the Frontiers are a worthless breed, & that the Public did not suffer a great loss in getting rid of that vermin which in time would have perverted the few good ones among them. To judge by what remains, they were no better than the savages: and their Children brought up in the Woods like Brutes without any notion of Religion, Government, Justice or Honesty, would not have improved the Breed.

Forgive this nonsense, occasioned by your Pity for the poor Inhabitants of Quebec. I would reconcile you a little to my Profession which has really no more cruelty in it than what we see daily without concern in the World. Lawsuits, Quarrels, Contentions, etc: what are they but wars between Individuals? It is true they don't kill one another because they are afraid of being hanged. But they go as far as they can safely venture in hurting their Enemies to the utmost of their Power in their Fortune and Reputation.

The adventure of poor Jack T. . . . will kindle a War of that kind. I had heard something of it, and was glad to know some more particulars from you. Not that I have any concern for either of the Parties. I was only pleased to notice on that occasion your generous sentiments of Humanity. I have felt too much the Power of Love to be insensible to the Pains of a disappointed Swain. I pity him, though I cannot help being surprised that having had for a whole year free and undisturbed access to the young thief, he could not make an agreeable impression upon her *novice heart*. Both sexes have an equal tendency to Love, and opportunity fixes that natural disposition upon one object. A sincere Passion, supported by some little Arts, will always

## The Willing Family

succeed when your pride is not in the way: and since he has miscarried with most of those advantages it must be his Fault. What must he do now? Sure, no girl will listen to him, and he must either shift his stage or hang himself. For there is no living in *my* opinion without love, and love without return is of all the miseries of life the most intolerable. Let him then go over the Seas; I have done with him.

I am much obliged by your offers of Tea, etc, etc, I shall make free to apply to you when I want anything—

. . . Our affairs are at last in a tolerable way and I expect to go to Pittsburg at the end of this Month.

I recommend my little Hut to your protection. It will be infinitely more agreeable to me if I know that you have been in it. There is no appearance that I shall enjoy the pleasure of your neighbourhood this year.

Farewell, my dear Nancy, My respects to Maman and the family. We have no news and shall have none on this side. Therefore if you favour me so much as to continue this correspondence, it will be pure Generosity without the least grain of Curiosity.

H. B.

*Lancaster, 28th February, 1760.*

YOUR extremely kind favour without date came last night to my hands. I should say to my heart, for I assure you it gave me the greatest pleasure. I had imagined that you had either forgot me or that I had disobliged you, tho: I could not guess how this could be either in deeds or thoughts. That fancy made me uneasy 'till I was so agreeably relieved by your letter.

I have sincerely felt with you that natural joy of a well-meaning heart in the prosperity of our Cause. But as to

## Recollections

my private news, of consequence to me only, I had no reason to be pleased. It is now probable I shall quit the service as soon as I can decently. I will not trouble you with my reasons for it, tho: if you have any curiosity to know them, you will be satisfied when we meet, as I have no *secrets from you*. But no more of this.

You have wrote to me with more openness than usual & I thank you for the favour. You found at last the certain way of pleasing me in speaking of yourself, a subject of all the most interesting to me. But you wrong me in supposing that I only pay you a compliment when I say that I do prefer your Conversation to any other pleasure. That is literally true, & I beg you will, for once, believe me; & if that persuasion can make you *scribble*, pray do scribble away, sure to oblige me infinitely. It is very true I told you that your letters which you used to write me were *stiff & precise*—it was indeed so. Now you have mended your style & I do acknowledge it with gratitude. Should I grant that you had no design in it I must take it to be so still, which I am unwilling to allow, choosing rather to be agreeably deceived than to suppose that you do not intend to oblige me.

Poor Dolly! how kind it was to think of me in the hurry of her first letter. I hardly can believe it & I must read again that Paragraph to be persuaded. I hope she will find London as disagreeable as I do & for the same reason—parting us from our best friends. The news of her safe arrival was not the least agreeable this Packet brought.

Why did you not go to the Assembly, upon such a brilliant night? I am afraid you were not well. Tell me I am mistaken. To see two such Brides at once at Philadelphia is a novelty worth looking for. And you say you don't envy

## The Willing Family

them. Pray is it their new state in general or any particular circumstance you don't like? For my part I cannot help wishing to be as happy as I suppose People are generally in that station when Matrimony, as in the present case, is the effect of pure choice & attended with the Public's approbation.

Can you not imagine that there is a real happiness in being united for life to the Person we esteem and love best? and as a true *honest girl* answer fairly the other Question — Don't you know any such thing in the World as a man who could make you think so? But this is diving too deep in the recesses of your heart. Therefore I stop and beg only you would believe that nobody deserves more your confidence by his sentiments than your most devoted and faithful friend,

H. B.

Pittsburg, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1760.

MY DEAREST NANCY,

I ACKNOWLEDGE with the greatest pleasure & truth that you are in every respect the honour of your Sex, and tho: you tease me with having a cold heart, I can assure you it is full of gratitude and love for you. I deserve reproaches less gentle than yours; but I hope you will forgive me when I tell my reasons for not writing to you. I was vexed at several things which made me so cross & peevish that I found myself completely unqualified to address you in any shape.

I have not the useful art to dissemble. I must appear what in reality I am, & in that disposition of mind I was certain that my letters could only be disagreeable, or at best insipid to you. This is true & I think you ought rather

## Recollections

to thank than blame me. But if I did not write I am conscious to have not spent one day without thinking of you, & to those thoughts I owe the only happy moments I have enjoyed.

If the tide of my affection *is near spent*, it must be the tide of my Inconstancy, for I am entirely devoted to you.

As to the new farm I think I owe the possession of it to the obliging care of your Brother. I was fond of that acquisition as long as I considered it in point of interest. But in reflecting that every day I might spend there would keep me absent from you, I felt my fancy much *cooled*.

It is a mere Wilderness, capable indeed of improvement; & if a distance of 140 miles from Philadelphia was an inconvenience to be removed, I would be entirely satisfied with that place.

I am anxious to hear of Mrs Stirling, & beg to be remembered to her every time you write. I was told she was to come back with her husband. I wish it may be so. She will certainly be happier at home than in England.

Tho: I may receive news from Philadelphia, you know very well that from you it would be more interesting; but provided you tell me what passes in your heart, I acquit you of all the rest.

In four days I am to march to Presque 'Isle, with some troops. You may safely write to me. Your letters shall be carefully forwarded. If I could not so regularly write to you, I hope you will not judge of my affection for you by the number of my letters, nor defer writing 'till you can do it in answer. I request that favour most *earnestly*.

Farewell, my dearest—I love you most sincerely. The same sentiments from you would secure my happiness.

H. B.

## The Willing Family

*Fort Pitt, 15th January, 1761.*

. . . The judicious reflections contained in your letter of the 14th of December, do equal honour to your understanding & the goodness of your heart. You are of opinion that (the first Place excepted) there is nothing in our Profession worth the thoughts of a man of sense. You must suppose that being so nearly concerned in that subject, I must often have weighed every argument Pro & Con. But yet I cannot determine which way the Scale may incline at last.

Born & educated in Europe where I was used to a variety of agreeable & improving conversations, I must confess that I don't find it easy to satisfy my Taste that way in this Country: where the Gentlemen are so much taken up with the narrow sphere of their Politics or their private affairs, that a Loiterer has no chance with them.

The Ladies who are settled in the World are commonly involved & buried in the details of their families, & when they have given you the anecdotes of their day's work, & the pretty sayings of their Children, with a dish of tea, you may go about your business, unless you choose to have the Tale over again.

The young ones having little or nothing in their heads have only their pretty faces to shew, & leave you to wish for the more agreeable endowments of a well-bred woman who can charm your mind as well as your eyes, and soften by the inexpressible Enchantment of her conversation the Toils and Anxieties attending our Station of Life.

This being the case in general (no matter whether real or imaginary) I say, that if I should get rid of the continual occupations of a Military Life I would, of course, feel a weariness of which I see almost nothing that could relieve me.

## Recollections

We must have some object in view—What could be mine?

I have no turn or Capacity for Agriculture or any kind of business.

How could I spend my time in a manner satisfactory to myself or useful to others?

From being something, I would fall to nothing, and become a sort of Incumbrance on the Society.

How could I brook the supercilious look and the surly Pride of the Humble Quaker? or the insulting rudeness of an Assembly-man, who, picked up from a dung-hill, thinks himself raised to a Being of a superior nature? How submit to the insolent Rusticity of the free Pennsylvania Boor, who knows no distinction among Mankind, and from a vile slavery in his Native Country, takes his newly acquired Liberty for a right to run into all the Excesses of Lentiousness & Arrogance?

In civilized Countries reciprocal Regards are paid by one Individual to another, which are the Chief ingredients of Happiness. They arise generally from Power, Riches, or personal merit.

Here, the two first only are known & respected—the Third despised as a thing of no use.

Making the application to myself who am far from being rich, if I resign the Power I possess by virtue of my rank in the Army, I must be alert to get out of anybody's way, for fear of being trampled on, and crushed as a crawling insect. Now what do you think preferable,—to be under the Command of one or two gentlemen or exposed to be insulted with impunity by the Majority of a People of such strange mixture?

I know this is exaggerated & that plausible answers can

## The Willing Family

be given to each Argument. It is the very thing I want. I would choose to be convinced that a full Liberty with some inconveniences is preferable to an honourable Slavery attended with real advantages.

Now, my dear Nancy, try your persuasive Eloquence. If I am to be persuaded it must be by you, for whom I have that powerful prepossession which inforces the weight of Reason, solves difficulties, & finds an easy access to the Heart.

This is too long a Dissertation which must tire you. But I am half joking & half in earnest, & I really do not know what will be best for me to do, to quit the service or continue in it.

I expect in a few days some of the Royal Welsh, and hope, when all is set to Rights . . . that I shall have a chance to go down.

Farewell my dearest, I am sincerely yours,

H. B.

I am afraid there was only too much truth in the Picture of our Provincial Society given by Colonel Bouquet in his last letter. There was in Pennsylvania certainly less education & less hereditary refinement than in any other of the older Colonies.

A very few only of the original Settlers could boast a good education. No schools were established for the higher studies, nor 'till the opening of our College was there any means whatever of acquiring even a moderate acquaintance with "polite letters."

A single Missionary Clergyman, poorly qualified & poorly supported—a few dissenting Ministers, & now & then a Swedish or German Dominie, a graduate of a second

## Recollections

class University. Sometimes a well-born British Pauper like Henry Brooke, sent to fill an Office in the Customs. The gentlemen of the Army, perhaps even less imbued then than now, with "humane letters"; & the few Barristers called from the neighbouring Provinces to fill those positions which needed some legal requirements—these & their families constituted almost the whole society which could be called educated & refined.

The vulgar bigotry of the Quakers—their ignorant self-conceit, shewn in "the supercilious look and surly pride," which Bouquet complained of, were unfortunately too characteristic of the whole class. Holding all education unnecessary in teachers of Religion & condemning all resort to Law among themselves, the two professions which in the other Colonies transmitted all the learning of the Old World were entirely discouraged. Present utility was the measure of their instruction—even the study of History was condemned as too secular & exciting. The Fine Arts in every department held to be misleading vanities & rigorously proscribed. Any variation from their conventional ugliness of dress, any deviation from the plainest utility in furniture, building or horticulture would surely be visited by their narrow censure. Thus, whatever was their worth as moral & industrious citizens, their presence in every other respect was an evil to the Community in so much as they discouraged any aspiration to what was liberal, high-minded, & tasteful.

And so it followed that the formation of Society, usually so-called, the gay & fashionable circle of our Rural City, was left to the somewhat incongruous assemblage of the official classes which surrounded our Proprietary Governors, the placemen of the British Customs, some Scotch &

## The Willing Family

English Merchants & a few lawyers & settlers from the neighbouring provinces. As yet New England had not begun to send us her shrewd & grasping Adventurers. I recollect the name of no one from the Eastern Colonies who gained fame or fortune in our Community until the close of our Colonial History, except Doctor Franklin.

The Shippens were the only family maintaining social position & influence from the time of William Penn to the American Revolution; & had not our Ancestor Edward Shippen been expelled from the Meeting, his descendants would probably have all been put to sleep in the Procrustean bed of Quakerism.

In Political life the Quakers were equally mischievous. Holding even defensive war to be sinful, they opposed all necessary appropriations for the protection of the frontiers, & they embarrassed the Government by their illiberal economy in all public expeditions.

Thus they lost all credit for the dull morality of their lives, their steady accumulation of wealth, & their support of local Charities, & even their benevolent interference in behalf of the Indians was misinterpreted.

By degrees they lost all power & influence, & we still suffer from the consequences. For, from the time about which I am writing, the Classes holding hereditary wealth & claiming a descent from the first settlers of . . . have never had the weight & influence which they should have acquired & maintained, & their places have been taken by low adventurers & pettifoggers.

The German elements of our population, except the early emigrants from the Palatinate, the Moravians who followed Count ZinZendorff & a few other smaller religious communities were truly *Boors*. In few respects better, in some

## Recollections

worse, than the very beasts of the field; often, as Dr Franklin describes them, the sweepings of the German Jails, sent by ship-loads & sold as servants—a cheaper disposition of them by their petty sovereigns, than to maintain them in prisons & poor-houses at home.

Their steady industry which has cultivated & enriched our interior counties can hardly be said to compensate for the ignorance and brutality which they have transmitted to their descendants of the present day.

How much the “insulting rudeness” of the Assembly-men of Bouquet’s time has been modified or improved in our own, I cannot say, but the standard of Honesty in our Legislative Halls has marvellously declined.

On the whole, we cannot wonder at the result of this deliberate admeasurement of the Comparative Blessings of Love, & the other ingredients of happiness.

I neither condemn this very sensible lover, nor doubt that my Grandmother decided wisely in giving up a brilliant match, & all the honours it might have brought, for the great happiness & the modest fortune which she secured by her marriage with Mr Tench Francis.

Of his Courtship I know nothing. How well he deserved and completely gained the love, honour, & duty of my Grandmother will appear hereafter.

III

Memoir of Tench Francis  
the Younger



# Tench Francis the Younger

*The Story of an Early Maryland Emigrant\**

MORE than a hundred & sixty years ago, a young man, Tench Francis, by name, a son of Dean Francis (of Lismore) of the Episcopal Church in Ireland, was at school in or near one of the seaports of that country.

For some neglect of his studies or other delinquency, he was deprived of his summer vacation, & informed that he must spend that portion of the year at school instead of at the pleasant Deanery of his Father!

In this determination of his elders he did not concur, & finding in the port a ship bound for the Choptank river, in Maryland, he entered her as a raw hand before the mast, & in due time arrived at Oxford, in Talbot county, on the eastern shore of Maryland.

This was in the year 1710.

On the morning after his arrival, being desirous of a change of diet, he obtained a small boat, & crossing to the other side of the river began to fish for crabs.

While thus engaged, he was accosted by Mr Benjamin Peck, an eminent lawyer of the county, & the owner of the estate on whose shore he was fishing. Mr Peck inquired his name & occupation, which Francis gave correctly, as a sailor of Captain Blank's ship, then lying at Oxford. Mr Peck, perceiving from his language & manner that he was no ordinary youth, replied, "You do not belong to Captain Blank's ship at all. Do you see that house over there, & that chimney among the trees? That is my house & my law

\* [Copied from a newspaper, probably the Washington Sunday Herald of March 28th, 1875. Interpolated by S. Cadwalader.]

## Recollections

office, & that is where you belong. I know Captain Blank very well, and will attend to your discharge."

In that way it was soon arranged that Francis should leave the ship & become a member of Mr Peck's family, & a student in his office.

By communication with the mother-country, his family were informed by Mr Peck of his residence & occupation, & made no objection to either.

In the course of a few years, after his admission to the bar, he obtained the lucrative post of clerk of indictments for Talbot county, and married a Miss Turbutt, with a handsome dowry.

[This lady was a great belle and had many admirers; it is related that at the wedding when the clergyman read the portion of the service where it says, "If anyone knows just cause or impediment why these two should not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak or else hereafter forever hold his peace," the bridegroom at this point turned round and glared at the congregation with his hand on his sword, ready to draw it, if anyone should so far presume. s. c.]

In 1734 he determined to remove to Philadelphia & resume the practice of the law.

He disposed of his office to Mr Leeds, for several thousand pounds & removed to that city, then the only American town larger than Annapolis with which the inhabitants of Maryland had much intercourse.

Baltimore was not yet in existence, & Philadelphia was accessible at all seasons of the year by smooth & level roads, or by water, with a portage of only fourteen miles across Delaware.

The Rev. Dr. Francis, the translator of Horace, chap-

## Tench Francis the Younger

lain of Lord Holland & preceptor of Charles James Fox, was a brother of Tench Francis, & the celebrated Sir Philip Francis, the reputed author of *Junius*, was his nephew. Dr Francis came out to Philadelphia before the Revolution, & made his brother a long visit.

Tench Francis was very successful as a lawyer in Philadelphia and rose to be the attorney-general of the Province, & one of its most influential citizens.

The junior member of the great house of Willing and Francis, of Philadelphia, was his son and Governor John Brown Francis, of Rhode Island, his great-grandson.

James Tilghman of Maryland, married a sister of Mrs Francis, & gave to his son the name of Tench, which has been transmitted in the Tilghman family to the present generation.

Tench Coxe, of Philadelphia, the eminent statistical writer, was also a descendant of Tench Francis.

[For the principal facts in this notice I am indebted to the Hon. John Bozman Kerr, a native of Talbot county, Maryland, who abounds with information historical and biographical pertaining to the early annals of his native State.]

OF the early life & education of my Grandfather, Tench Francis, I have nothing to tell, having omitted to enquire of those who could have informed me, & there being no MSS. in my possession which give even a hint.

Being born in Kent County, Maryland, he almost certainly spent his youth there, his Father not removing to Philadelphia before he was ten or twelve years old.

## Recollections

We may surmise that he remained longer among his Mother's relatives; for there were probably better school-masters in Maryland than in Philadelphia, before the foundation of the "Academy."

While his letters give no indication of any special literary taste, and the few books of his which have descended to me afford no reference to early studies, I can only infer again, a good English education. My Grandmother, in writing to her daughter, speaks of his superior capacity to direct her studies & guide her tastes; but I am inclined to think he owed more to the society he moved in, which was the best, & to the experience & trials of an active life, for the accumulation of a more than usual store of knowledge & wisdom.

That he won the affections of Anne Willing, after all she had seen of life, & her unusual opportunities of elegant culture, may be accepted as evidence that he possessed more than ordinary attractions.

It was probably on the Eastern shore of Maryland that he acquired his fondness for rural life, & formed his peculiar taste for horticulture. He learned there to observe & love animals, & during the period of his prosperity, had fine horses & cattle.

We may be sure that he would not have been one of the founders of the "Gloucester Hunting Club," at the age of twenty-five, unless he had been accustomed to follow the hounds in his native state.

He always loved the sports of the country, & even in later life he is said to have found resources in his dog & gun. But, whatever was his Mother's share of the . . . estate, the divided inheritance gave no position to her son among the landed aristocracy of the Eastern Shore. He came, at latest, at the time of his majority, to Philadelphia

## Tench Francis the Younger

and entered, as was usual in those days, as an apprentice in the Counting House of William Coleman. This was the friend of Dr Franklin, an original member of the "Junto Club," who was, as he says, a merchant of great note, & one of the Provincial Judges. He says: "He had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart, & the exactest morals of almost any man I ever met with." & my Grandfather writes of him with great interest, long afterward, when he met him in England in 1765; the latter being there to consult physicians for an incurable disease.

Before his 24th year, my Grandfather was established in successful business: for at that time his Father, retiring from the practise of the Law, entered into partnership with him, & going to England with the double purpose of health & business, addressed to his son a series of commercial letters, indicating a remarkable knowledge & acuteness on all matters of trade & currency.

In 1758 he died, leaving his son in the enjoyment of one of the best commercial establishments in America.

In this he soon afterwards associated his nephew, Tench Tilghman, the eldest son of his sister Anne, & the profits of the trade seem to have been in a few years large enough to authorize plans of retirement to more congenial occupations, on the fine estate he had acquired in New Jersey. The estate was called the Paradise Farm, & was situated on Mantua Creek, in Gloucester County, New Jersey. It remained in his possession until his death, & was sold by his widow to a Mr Whitehall. At his Mother's urgent request, he took, it would appear soon after his marriage, as his town residence, the house his Father had built in Chestnut Street above Third Street, on the site now occupied by the large granite building west of the Bank of North America.

## Recollections

This had been left for life, to his widow, by my Great-Grandfather, but apparently, without sufficient income to live in it, though it seems probable she may have possessed a considerable estate in Maryland.

Her son took it at a rent of £120 per annum—equal to \$320, which would seem very small now for so good a house. It was still standing with very little alteration, about twenty years ago. He soon afterward purchased the lot to the east of it, where the Bank of North America now stands, & erected, as his Counting House, the building where the first Bank, incorporated by Congress, was established, & has held its place to the present day.

The large lot behind was devoted to the cultivation of the finest fruits, pears, plums & grapes, in which he was particularly successful. And, if I mistake not, some of the trees were still productive when the old bank was pulled down, a few years ago.

There my Grandparents were established, if not on their marriage, a few years afterwards.

My Grandfather was certainly a good match; & his abilities & character were such as were most calculated to impress so sensible a woman as he selected.

As I said before, I have no notice of her courtship, nor can I date their acquaintance to a much earlier period; though in our small society they could not have remained unknown to each other.

The union was a most happy one; there could be no waning of confidence or decay of affection. The few letters, which I have to quote from, shew the most complete sympathy & devotion; & for several years they seem to have had everything to make them happy.

The place they appear to have taken at once in our pro-

## Tench Francis the Younger

vincial society was certainly one of the first. The few letters in which they are referred to, lead us to suppose their house was the centre of hospitality. Some of the most distinguished people from the neighbouring colonies, and the eminent officers of the English army, were received in it — Sir Geoffrey Amherst, Mr Napier, Mr Watts, General Schuyler, etc., & the latter seems to have been an intimate friend of my Grandfather. At the same time was formed his intimate acquaintance with Richard Penn. He was one of the Governor's Club, & we find him, at least on one occasion, with his Excellency, the Governor, on the day of his meeting with the Indian Chief. His table was one of unostentatious hospitality, yet there was a good deal of expense in his establishment, to judge by the remains which have come down to us. There is still in my possession some very handsome & massive plate, both for tea & dinner service, china of fine India patterns, & a Dresden set for tea, of which, one article alone remains. I recollect many Dresden ornaments for the mantel, of which the Flora, in the étagere, & some smaller pieces are preserved. Very handsome carved mahogany furniture of which I have several cabinets & tables. There were many more which should have been preserved; particularly a richly carved side-board, which my Mother gave away to poor relations or servants, as she hated old or broken furniture, & got rid of them, before I was old enough to appreciate their value or associations.

My Grandmother was an admirable house-keeper; my Grandfather an epicure, & all that our markets could supply, or his importations furnish, were supplemented from his own garden, or easily collected by his gun, in an expedition of a few hours; for he was an excellent shot, an

## Recollections

accomplishment transmitted to his youngest son, Charles, who was the most remarkable shot of his day.

I do not know whether any descendant of his, now alive, is worthy to inherit the fine fowling pieces, some of which are still extant, certainly not, the writer!

All these relics must date from the early days of their marriage, for the troubles which I am now to narrate, followed afterwards by those which preceded, accompanied, & followed the time of the Revolution so reduced their fortunes, that such expenses would hardly be justified.

In a letter of my Grandmother's, she speaks of her chariot, & a chaise, & several horses. The letters of Thomas Willing, from England, refer to expensive commissions. My Grandmother's dresses, several of which came down to my time, are particularly rich. One is still preserved. Also a magnificent baptismal dress of one of her children, sent from England, with a sort of cloak or coverlet of cloth of gold & purple, to be thrown over the child. All these things indicate considerable wealth, not as they would now be estimated, but ample in those days for people of sense, as my Grandparents certainly were.

I have always heard that not long after his marriage, my Grandfather intended to retire from business, & live upon his means, when he was seduced into a speculation which brought him to the verge of ruin. Some of his business friends had introduced to his acquaintance, a merchant by name of Godhard Hayne, who was then supposed to be one of the first in the Mediterranean trade of the time, of great wealth and undoubted integrity. Hayne proposed to my Grandfather to furnish him for public service, a very large amount of . . . & other supplies for the Army. The terms were so tempting, the gains so secure, that my Grandfather

## Tench Francis the Younger

made purchases to the extent of his own credit, chartered every vessel to be had in our own, or other American ports, & despatched them in all haste, drawing at once for his reimbursement. The last of his provision ships had hardly sailed, before the news arrived of Hayne's failure; & it appeared this whole commission was a gigantic & perfidious fraud!! My Grandfather felt himself ruined! In those days of slow voyages, it was a matter of great doubt when he would be able to reach England. He rode post-haste to the Capes of Delaware, hoping to find one vessel was detained by wind, but was too late, & many weeks, perhaps months, elapsed before he could face his fraudulent correspondent. My Grandfather sailed for England in the Spring of 1767, & reached Falmouth in June. He was accompanied by his Brother, Turbutt, then holding only a Lieutenant's commission in the Army; but being in ill-health, ready to dispose of it by sale. On their arrival in London, my Grandfather was received with great kindness by his commercial correspondents, Messrs Sargent & Chambers, & being invited to the house of the latter gentleman, made it his home for fourteen months; at least I am led to infer so, from the close friendship which seems to have sprung up at once, with all the family, & lasted long afterwards, as letters in my possession prove.

The wife & sister of Mr Chambers, the latter a clever woman, seem to have studied his comfort & happiness; & in the quiet domestic circle, he had every consolation that education, refinement, & society could afford. To them he talked daily of his wife & child, his pleasant home, & the bright hopes, so nearly brought to ruin!

Mr Thomas Willing, of London, was also at hand with his efficient advice & assistance; & the husband of his darling niece, soon won equal affection.

## Recollections

Writing to his wife, of her Uncle, he says : “ With tears in his eyes, he swears my wife is the finest, best, good creature in the world. I talk to him by the hour of you, & you don’t know how it flatters my vanity, to hear him sound your praises.”

In this small circle of acquaintances, which he seemed to have little desire to extend, he found all possible consolation from the harassing cares of the Chancery Suit, in which he was at once involved. He makes no mention of amusements, though Garrick was then on the stage; nor of any of the gay & exciting scenes of the British Capital.

References in the subsequent letters to her prove that he must have taken a considerable interest in the exciting political questions of the day; when Wilkes’s popularity & persecutions were exciting the populace to madness, when the letters of Junius were discharging their unequalled thunderbolts of . . . & Parliament witnessing those wonderful encounters of eloquence between Chatham & Mansfield! I have, in the subsequent letters of their cousin, Philip Francis, evidence that he knew my Grandfather & his Brother, & had a high esteem & friendship for them, & this is the only period of their lives, when they could have met! Yet the letters which remain to my Grandmother are silent on this subject!

Turbutt Francis was probably induced by his cousin, to retain his commission: & it is not unlikely, had his influence at the War Office, to procure his promotion. He returned before his Brother to America, in improved health, & for years was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, in the Royal Americans! Which was better than selling out for 800 guineas, which he had been offered by a wealthy Baronet!

## Tench Francis the Younger

My Grandfather on his arrival secured the services of an eminent solicitor, Mr Grosse, & his case being laid before Solicitor General Wells, had his decided opinion in its favour; but he was induced to engage the most eminent lawyer of the time, Mr Charles Yorke, son of the great Lord Hardwicke, & himself classed among the holders of the great Seal, in Lord Campbell's interesting Biographies.

Although the great lawyer expressed great interest & confidence in the cause entrusted to him, he could not expedite its progress. Hayne & his assignees put forward every plea which could cause delay. Cross Bills were filed, & month after month, the plaintiff's hopes were raised, to be again disappointed. Some preliminary questions were favourably decided in August, 1767; but after six months more he writes to his wife in February, 1768: "You cannot think, my dearest Nancy, how it distresses me to find that ship after ship is sailing, & I am condemned to stay behind. No wretch in Siberia suffers more by banishment into that most inhospitable country, than your partner at this moment. I neither can, nor will, be much longer separate from the woman I adore! Indeed, I will see you in the course of next summer, if it please God to spare my life."

Besides his eminent Counsel, he had secured some valuable influence about the Court; particularly in the friendship of a Mr Nuttall, an intimate of Lord Camden, & secretary of the Chancery Court. Writing in May, my Grandfather says: "I am confident I shall gain my cause. Mr Nuttall has talked to Lord Camden on its merits, & from what I can learn, although Mr Nuttall will not speak plain, the Chancellor is clear in my favour." Yet his hopes were again damped by finding in July, 1768, that his cause

## Recollections

stood upwards of thirty back — & he despaired of having it heard this term — there being only four more days to hear causes — after which, a very long vacation till November takes place. This induced him once more to try his fortune, & petition for a . . . which had been denied in May.

And here would occur an incident narrated by Mr Binney, on the faith of a tradition which he must have received from one of the family, & which altho' not in its particulars true, seems to authorize a presumption with which I may qualify the account given by my Grandfather, of the further interference in his behalf by his friend Mr Nuttall, & its great success.

The story told by Mr Binney is as follows: "When the repeated postponements of the hearing had brought my Grandfather to the verge of despair, a lady, intimate with him, & feeling the greatest interest in his cause, undertook to bring it to the favourable attention of the Lord Chancellor. Knowing him to be a 'bon vivant,' she said to Mr Francis: "If you can procure, through some of your West India friends, a fine turtle, & direct my cook how to dress it in the most approved style, I will ask his Lordship to dinner, & when he is at the height of his enjoyment, introduce you as the purveyor of this luxury!"

"This could be easily accomplished, as my Grandfather's experience at the 'Fish Club,' & his domestic hospitalities had accomplished him in the culinary arts.

"And when Lord Camden was expressing his delight & asking all about the turtle, his hostess took occasion to present her friend, & state his heart-sickness from deferred hopes, & the vexatious impediments of the Court. On which his Lordship promised that the case should be called up

## Tench Francis the Younger

at the next session, at which he gave the expected decision against the assignees of Hayne, in favour of my Grandfather."

Now the extract from my Grandfather's letter refutes this interesting anecdote. But as the appeal to Lord Camden's humanity was made at a jovial dinner, when the whole party were in the height of enjoyment, we may very well suppose that the turtle had something to do with it, & that my Grandfather was the purveyor, although he does not think proper to mention it.

What he writes to his wife, July 4th, 1768, is as follows: "Previous to presenting my petition, I got my friend, Mr Nuttall, Secretary to the Chancery Court, & an intimate friend of Lord Camden, to move in my favour. Accordingly on Thursday last, when he dined with my Lord Chancellor at the 'King's Arms,' he took the advantage of making his request, when the whole company were at the height of their jollity. Most luckily for me he succeeded, & some day this week our fate will be determined. I cannot help being under anxiety for the issue of this most important affair, though I am clear I ought to succeed as of my existence, & at present, I know not whether I stand on my head or my heels."

And in the next letter he writes: "I mentioned in my last that my Lord Chancellor had ordered my cause for hearing on Thursday morning when after a trial of three hours, he gave a decree fully in my favour."

He tells his wife: "Do not be impatient, but bless God we are not totally reduced to poverty. In a few years we shall with industry & frugality be able to retrieve all that we have lost."

In a letter to his brother-in-law James Tilghman, he says

## Recollections

he lays his account in losing not more than six thousand pounds sterling, & then to his wife he says: "Mr Biggin, a man of immense wealth, who has a contract for supplying the ships of War on the Jamaica Station, has promised to give me the shipment of his bread, flour, & pork from Philadelphia. He will send his orders in a few days to Tenny." (Tilghman, the nephew & partner of Tench Francis, afterwards known as Colonel Tilghman, aide-de-camp of General Washington.)

How much of the property so fraudulently obtained was rescued by my Grandfather I cannot tell. He, a few days before the last date, expresses a hope of recovering fifteen or seventeen shillings to the pound sterling. But damages & expenses must be probably deducted. Yet the relief was immense; & among the cheering words to his wife, he tells her, after satisfying all his creditors, they may: "be able to live happier than they ever did," for the small cross-incidents of life cannot give the least uneasiness after what they have already suffered. "Times are changing, but we shall never meet with such another year as black as 1767. All will yet be well, and as I said before, let Providence but once more unite us, & bless us with health, I'll venture to assert, we cannot be unhappy. Ten times ten thousand blessings attend you & all around you!"

There was nothing now to delay his return but the settlement of another piece of business which had engaged his attention, from the time he received his first dividends from the assignees of Hayne; the purchase of a fine estate in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia; which, after his experience of the vicissitudes of commercial affairs, he supposed to be the safest investment of his diminished means. This was the "Vineyard Estate" being part of the Pro-

## Tench Francis the Younger

prietary Manor of Springettsbury, which had been sold in the beginning of the century to Jonathan Dickinson, & had descended to his Grandchildren of the name of Jones, then living with small fortunes & great debts in Shropshire. The boundaries of this property were the present Coates Street to the South; the Ridge Road to the East, as far as, or beyond, Turner's Lane; and the Schuylkill River to the West; & it comprised upwards of 500 acres.\*

Between this property & the city, lay "Bush Hill," the seat & residence of Governor James Hamilton, and the residence of Springettsbury where the younger son of William Penn had built a house, commonly occupied by the Penns, when in the Province. One wing of this house & the stables & greenhouse were still standing in my boyhood, close to the site of the Preston Retreat. After a long negotiation, which involved several journeys of my Grandfather to Ludlow in Shropshire, the purchase was effected, for £5.13, shillings per annum, & £300 to Edward Jones to give possession. It was an acquisition which gave my Grandfather great satisfaction. Its neighbourhood to the fine seats of Governor Hamilton & the Penns, & its vicinity to the city, were particular attractions, independent of its prospective value, & the New Jersey estate was too distant for much intercourse with the best people of the Province & his own family; but at "The Vineyard" he would be quite surrounded by his friends. His Father's house on the present site of South Laurel Hill, was still owned by his Mother; lower down the road was the seat of Henry

\* A portion of this area would appear to have been sold by the Jones family; especially the present site of the Girard College, then occupied by "Peel Hall," which was standing within my recollection. Immediately before the Revolution it was owned & occupied by one of the Penn family.

J. F. F.

## Recollections

Harrison; on Green Hill, Mr Meredith's; on the Schuylkill, just above the latter, the house of my Great-Grandfather, Joshua Fisher, opposite Judge Peters' & Judge Beveridge's; & soon afterwards Lansdowne, built by Governor John Penn.

Before making any further reference to this purchase, & my Grandfather's residence there, we must with him take leave of his English friends, the Chambers & Sargents, with whom he appears to have lived on terms of the most affectionate intimacy. At Mr Chambers' house in London, & Mr Sargent's country place called "May Place," he seems to have had all the quiet enjoyment of an English home. The ladies were well educated, intelligent, & sympathising, & entered with the deepest interest into all his joys & cares. Their correspondence afterwards with my Grandmother, whom they only knew through her husband, is a singular proof of this. The interchange of presents continued for many years; chiefly specimens of needlework; & my Grandfather learned to do some netting & tambour-work; then very fashionable; & carried the art to Philadelphia; & taught it to the ladies of his family. This is in itself a singular evidence of his domestic tastes & devotion to home pleasures. He was anything but effeminate, all his habits were manly, but his wife was the object of his constant thought, & no plan in which she was not associated, had interest for him. He did not the less captivate the affection & admiration of these good English ladies, as their subsequent letters prove, & Miss Sophia Chambers was the Godmother of his eldest daughter, through whom the name of Sophia has been transmitted to the younger members of the family, & to the children of many friends of my Aunt Harrison.

## Tench Francis the Younger

Several letters of Mr Chambers & of Mr Thomas Willing might be cited as evidence of the friendship & high esteem they conceived for my Grandfather.

It does not appear from anything I know, that he received any attention from his Uncle, Dr Francis, or his cousin, afterwards so celebrated as Sir Philip Francis. I have a strong suspicion that my Grandfather did not desire their acquaintance. His Brother, Turbutt, benefitted somewhat by his (Sir P. F.'s) interposition at the War Office, & kept up a friendly correspondence for some years, several specimens of which, in the autographs of Junius (I suppose I may so call him) are in my possession. And Mr R . . . 's letters from Philadelphia, prove that he was admitted to friendly intercourse; but my Grandfather could have no congeniality with his unprincipled, ambitious, & malignant relative. His eminent domestic virtues, & simple tastes, his alliance with an elegant & refined woman, must have made such society as is described in the recently printed "Life of Sir Philip Francis," as his chief enjoyment, excessively disgusting, to the American merchant & agriculturist.

My Grandfather returned by a winter voyage to America at the end of the year 1768. Wanting a more direct conveyance to Philadelphia, he was obliged to take a vessel bound to Virginia. This we find in the last of an interesting series of letters to her husband by my Grandmother fortunately preserved; interesting, not indeed as specimens or studies of epistolary style, nor yet as full of incident & anecdote, but as out-pourings of a devoted wife's affection, & details of daily life, corresponding so far to her husband's, above referred to; as to prove that with her too, all her regrets for loss of fortune, & disappointed

## Recollections

schemes of life, were absorbed in the one regret, the separation from her loved husband, who had proved himself so worthy of her love.

I cannot refrain from inserting pretty extensive extracts from them showing how her hours & days were filled up, & how every thought had reference to him.

When it became necessary for my Grandfather to go to England for an indefinite time, he decided at once to give up his establishment in Chestnut Street, & to discharge his servants, put down his carriages. It was doubtful whether he would not be reduced to absolute poverty. Consideration for his Mother prevented his throwing the dwelling on her hands at once, & rent was paid to her in his absence, & for many years afterwards at an enormous sacrifice. Various tenants in subsequent years having occupied & never paid for it, among others Turbutt Francis. The whole detail of these difficulties are contained in a long letter to my Great-Grandmother.

Mr Thomas Willing, then married to Anne McCall, & already the Father of several children, had taken possession of his Father's house on Third Street, the corner of Willing's Alley, & offered a home to his favourite sister. Here she was received & treated with the greatest deference & kindness, as the extracts from her letters prove. Here her fourth son was born; two infant sons (twins) having previously died. This was the son named after her Uncle & Brother, Thomas Willing Francis, whose christening is mentioned as happily coinciding with the receipt of what was thought a noble gift of four (!) hundred pounds from his bachelor Great-Uncle in England. This gift was afterwards a source of more difficulty than advantage, for my Grandfather, having invested it in the funds, or in a bond

## Tench Francis the Younger

& mortgage to accumulate for his son, it was paid off in continental money, & after his death, it had to be made up by his Widow, with interest, to her Son, out of her small property. This was not the subject of any suit or resistance, but was settled by reference, & paid without complaint, though with great inconvenience, at a time when my Uncle could much better bear to forego it than his Mother.

I here insert the extracts from my Grandmother's part of the correspondence which I have made.

### ANNE FRANCIS TO TENCH FRANCIS

*Philadelphia, May 27th, 1767.*

MY spirits are so much depressed that I can scarce support the appearance of content which gratitude alone ought to extract from me, surrounded as I am, by the best & tenderest of friends. The very great attention all under this roof pay to me & our dear Johnny, is inexpressible, & would, under any other circumstances, make me perfectly happy; but, deprived of you, no pleasure, no joy, can enter my soul. You alone engross my thoughts. I scarce think of my own situation, till our little Son rouses me with his tender entreaties to write for you to come home—that he is a good boy—etc—etc. He is my companion all night, & as much as possible by day. I came here with Brother the night after we parted, & I believe shan't stir out till I visit "Paradise" which this year, every one thinks, will turn out extremely well. All the grass about town having run to seed, before it got any tolerable growth, will make hay bear a great price next winter. Your mare sold for £34. The chair-horse is not yet sold. Jimmy Tilghman has offered the chariot to Captain Hay for £130. He has not yet determined to take it, but desired I would

## Recollections

send it for him to see this morning. I think it worth more, & unless he gives that price it shan't be sold, till we are obliged by necessity. It won't be injured by remaining in that house till Fall. The weather has been remarkably cold these eight days; I am now sitting by a good fire. I hope you've supported the good spirits with which you went abroad. God Almighty bless you, & render all your schemes happy! I can add no more; my heart is too full. This only, that I am most affectionately,

Your Wife,

ANNE FRANCIS

*June 12th, 1767.*

I SAW an extract of a letter from London, 5th, April, from which I can no longer doubt but we shall be reinstated in all our just possessions—so apt are we to believe as we wish that the least favourable circumstance at once confirms our desires. You may naturally think we count the days, nay the hours, as they pass, & that the time is almost expired that we allow for your floating on the waves. . . .

I have spent a day at Paradise, & was not a little pleased with the account William gave me of the meadows & his success in fishing. He waits for rain before he attempts to cut the grass. 'T is generally believed that grass will be as scarce as in '62 when you may remember we paid eight pounds a ton for hay; if so our farming will turn out well. Brother would not suffer me to stay any time at Paradise, as you can't be with me, for various reasons, one that predominates being the difficulty I might have in coming up on a sudden warning. His affection & tenderness are beyond expression; indeed Nancy & all the family seem en-

## Tench Francis the Younger

tirely united to make this an agreeable house to me, & they have succeeded beyond my expectations; but a home blessed with your dear company is a prospect to which I look with the greatest eagerness.

Johnny interrupts me reminding me of a promise I made him of going to-day to visit your Mother at the Falls. You know his impatient temper. His spirits are ten times greater than ever, & I begin to doubt my ability to keep them under proper regulation.

Give my love to Sister Stirling, I must depute you to talk, instead of my scribbling to her. I can't write with pleasure to anyone till I meet you again!

*July 4th, 1767.*

MY BEST BELOVED,

AS I can't omit giving you the least degree of pleasure, without suffering myself great pain, I have roused from my bed to tell you, I am greatly recovered from an indisposition which has hovered over me these nine days; a violent cold was followed by the cholera and all its attendants. I withstood medicine of all kinds, even though my favourite remedy at this time proved ineffectual. I flatter myself, however, I have at last conquered it. The extreme heat of last month occasioned many complaints of the sort. Never was such a June known! The great drought & excessive heat after such a cold spring, have totally destroyed all garden stuff, which to me in particular has been a great loss. Betty called on me to-day, & gave me a very pleasing account of Paradise. They have nearly hauled all their hay, which is finely cured, and a very extraordinary crop. Their rye is also housed, & that, & the indian corn will turn out as plentiful as their hearts can wish.

## Recollections

The milk-house, I have the pleasure to tell you, is very fine this year, quite cold enough to recover the reputation of Betty's butter, which is the best brought to market; so that the ice-house is not so much wanted as we feared. Our man, Lichfield, pleases William extremely.

In short, everything turns out there as well as you can wish. The piece of meadow that was in hemp last year is in fine hemp this, having sowed itself. William thinks he shall manage it better now.

I am little conversant with the world, & if I were more so, when I write to you, my thoughts would naturally turn to such subjects as I know you like best.

Seven long weeks have now passed since we parted, & sure never was time more tediously spent, or less satisfactorily to your poor Nancy; but what is still harder, as many more must elapse before I can hear from the dear "partner of my soul"! I spent a couple of hours at our house the other morning, the only visit I have paid since you left me, & the chief enlivener was wanting there. I felt a gloomy pleasure in being in the house we have spent so many happy hours in; still flattering myself those happy days would return to us!

Our dear Son is grown very tall & thin. He plagues me just now very much to send for you, & makes many promises of being exceedingly good if I will send for his dear Papa! His little heart fills whenever he speaks of you!

*August 23rd, 1767.*

**T**HE time is near elapsed that I allowed to hear of your arrival; how tediously have the days & hours passed!

My heart recoils from anything that offers it pleasure! I have tasted none since you left me, except what our dear

## Tench Francis the Younger

child gives me, which is sadly embittered by the prospect I have of not being able to support him in the manner we formerly flattered ourselves with.

When I wrote you last, I was much elated with the news of that day, but during the whole summer the accounts have so eternally contradicted each other, that there was no depending upon any. I am, however, prepared for the worst; if cruel Fortune will only let me pass the remainder of this short life in the sweet society of my dear Husband & our little one!! 'Tis hard to submit to poverty, but what hardship cannot a great mind surmount? Let us be so much above the common vulgar as to despise that which every knave can rob us of! Love & virtue are treasures out of fortune's reach; let us increase these, & we shall be the objects, not of envy, but admiration!

If 't was possible for all my thoughts to reach you respecting only yourself, the interruptions they would give your necessary business, would be too frequent; therefore I won't write them all to you; so much only as will convince you of my constant attention & love.

In the interval between this and the next letter, was born a son afterwards called Thomas Willing Francis.

*September 29th, 1767.*

**W**RAPPED up in a blanket, & supported by pillows, I have taken up my pen to tell my dearest life, I am recovering fast, & have no complaint to make of my health. But how shall I describe the cruel tortures that disappointment & continual doubt rear up for me! 'Tis four weeks tomorrow since I had the happiness to receive your dear affectionate letter from Falmouth, & never shall for-

## Recollections

get the agreeable sensation the news gave me of your arrival in health! I was ill, but forgot my pain! Four days after, August 3rd, I was delivered of our fourth son, a most lovely babe, with as fine a constitution, & fine a form as we could wish! Poor soul, he was not favoured as his brothers had been! There was no Father to bid him welcome, & all the kind affectionate terms which our friends expressed on the occasion, didn't satisfy me. I missed my dear Mate, & couldn't receive the cool congratulations of others;—for cool all must be in comparison with what I should have received from my dear Life! Every post since, I have impatiently expected, in hopes of hearing some pleasing circumstances related by yourself, but alas! not one syllable has come to hand; no Packet since June, & I find you won't write by Merchantmen.

*October 7th, 1767.*

I AM this evening left alone in my little nursery, the young people are all gone to the Play; my dear Brother is engaged for us at a meeting of the creditors, the result of which he will tell you of.... These last ten days have produced four letters from you, all of which gave real joy to a heart more than commonly anxious, & though I am not yet acquainted with my fate, yet to know you were well & had reason to believe we should be able to live comfortable & happy, gave such a check to the gloom that had engrossed me, that I am quite another creature. My health seems established, and I nurse my baby with great credit. He is a very fine child, & I have called him after two of our good friends, and I hope the name will be agreeable to you. Gratitude influenced me as I knew I should please the best of Brothers by giving our child his name, & I did

## Tench Francis the Younger

this although I knew you thought two names disadvantageous to men. If you continue to think so, he can easily drop one if he lives to be of consequence in the mercantile world. It can be no difference in any other profession.

*October 7th,*

**Y**OU will see by the papers that John Lawrence is appointed in the room of Stedman, our third judge, so that he has not altogether lost his labour. This additional feather will raise him high enough. Our Brother is the fourth judge, and they are to ride the circuit together.

[She speaks of riding on the mare the first time this nine months.]

*October 18th, 1767.*

**S**HE pleased me so much that I intend riding every fine day this Fall; I am much better & sleep heartier for this exercise. Dicky & Charles have been to Paradise and came home enraptured with the meadows and every part of the farm. They have kept the horses & cattle from the malignant disorder that so generally prevailed in town & country, & I hope they will be fortunate enough to avoid it altogether. Our two sons are well. How happy should I be to see you in the situation I am in at present,—to have one on my lap, the other pulling my head to kiss me, and saying I have wrote enough. God bless you & grant us a happy meeting very soon, life without you is not worth a wish. All the endeavours of my good family are insufficient for my happiness etc, etc.

*October 19th, 1767.*

**T**HIS is the gay week, so much talked of, by the members of the "Jockey-Club," and to be sure, if we may

## Recollections

judge by the many public amusements, the racketing of coaches, the vast number of showy strangers, that pass by here, the "Beau Monde" is very gay! How extremely different are the objects of pleasure to different people, & even to the same, at different periods of their lives! I can well remember, for it's not long since, I should have enjoyed all this bustle, with as high a relish as the keenest among the present circle of gay folks. With what a strange indifference do I now behold their searching after pleasures I've tasted and forsook! I am afraid if I say more on the subject you may laugh at me for turning moralist. I think I will take Young's advice, & bid adieu to the world before it leaves me. Indeed my dearest Life, a very confined circle will surround all I love. To live in harmony with those is the very utmost of my wishes.

[She writes to beg her husband if possible to bring out a good cook] . . . "We have none, & can get none here, & good servants are as cheap as bad ones."

*October 20th, 1767.*

**I**F you encrease in bulk, we shall make no inconsiderable figure by the side of your Sisters & their Husbands. I was always vexed at my growing fat, but if you'll keep me in countenance, I shall be much pleased with my size. I wish I could part with the delicacy of my constitution as easily as with the little I had in my form, for I find so much care necessary to keep me in tolerable health, that 't is an absolute slavery to myself, & a tax on those around me, as their assiduity to do what they think will promote my happiness every way is without a parallel.

## Tench Francis the Younger

*November, 1767.*

I AM going this day, to do what you would have great pleasure in doing yourself, which is to direct the covering the grape-vines, fig trees, etc in our garden. Mr Hudson very kindly offered his assistance, indeed that man esteems you highly, & shows it by every action & expression.

*January 2nd, 1768.*

BROTHER is truly glad to find you likely to make that purchase of the Vineyard, & hopes you 'll not lose it for double the price you offered. Lands (meaning wild lands) you know, are greatly fallen, & the prospect of an immediate Indian War will still depreciate them at any distance from us. An express came to town yesterday with an account of another massacre of Indians by one white man (*blank*) which with some other reasons we dread, will cause an Indian War. Tubby, (Turbutt) I believe, knows this horrid murderer, as he went eighteen months ago to dispossess him of some lands he held wrongfully. We have had a most remarkable fine winter, though our river is now fast. This fine day has invited the girls abroad, some in a sleigh, others in a wheel-carriage. I refused joining either party for a greater pleasure, though to be candid, I hope you 'll receive this in Philadelphia. Believe me, my dearest Life, that all the favours of fortune bestowed on me without your dear company, would not render life tolerable to your poor Nancy. Indeed I can't be happy without you. Sure 't is now verified that you are my better half. I often wish I could appear more satisfied with my present fate, as all around me seem so entirely bent on making me happy; I am sure I owe them more than I can ever repay. However, I have this comfort, they are the only people in the world that I could bear to be in such debt to!

## Recollections

May 4th, 1768.

LITTLE did we think [the anniversary of Tench Francis's departure] this day would arrive before we met again! A cruel fate! What is the loss of fortune to the separation from the object of one's love! A thousand times I have wished myself with you, flattering myself that I could mitigate the evils you have suffered. The thought of your distress has afflicted me ten times as much as the loss of that dirty trash we all hold too dear. 'T is custom only makes us value it. We may be happy clothed in homespun, & sheltered by a thatched roof. I care not where or how I am settled, provided you are happy, & we, with our children enjoy good health . . . Nancy has added another to her pretty flock, so that we seem alive with children. Mrs Bache (Dr Franklin's daughter) called this house a fine manufactory for babies, & I don't think improperly. Notwithstanding our numerous sets of infants, servants, etc, etc, we live in great harmony & affection; everyone endeavouring to follow Brother's example of attention & civility to me and mine; so that I have not the least cause to regret my leaving home during your absence. I have often been sorry we did not give up our house. 'T is a heavy rent for us now, & your poor Mother can't afford to have her income lessened; her encumbrances are great now. She has poor Rachel & her three children & nurse to maintain. What a villain her Husband is! He has now proved himself what we knew him long ago to be, to our sorrow. I asked Mr Tilghman if no step could be taken to secure something for us; but he says, "No." The Virginia lands cannot be attached for our debt, during his absence, & there is nothing here.

Give my affectionate love to Uncle, I am truly thank-

## Tench Francis the Younger

ful for his beneficence to our dear Son. The news came very à propos, for by some accident his christening was put off till the last of April, when Mr Duché, & the rest of the good company were assembled to see Nancy's Son & Daughter, and our's, made Christians. Just at that time my Uncle's letter came to hand, with his generous present! I was very busy gardening, when Sparks arrived, full of good spirits, in the hope that my dearest Life would, in a few days, come home! The disappointment was very great, & would be insupportable but for the extreme tenderness & affection of those dear letters, which I read over & over, night & morning!

Johnny is a good boy, I hope you won't think I have spoilt him! Mr Dove has opened a school just opposite to us in Dillworth's old workshop, which is very convenient, & I have entered him there. He is much delighted at going to a man's School!

Brother is not yet returned from the Circuit. Charles sails for Barbadoes in three or four days. The garden seeds I mentioned were much injured in the ship, & the apricot trees quite dead; I have but two plants of artichokes come up, & none of the radishes, but I expect you to eat some fine grapes this summer, gathered by your own hands; our vines are very flourishing.

*June 11th, 1768.*

MY BEST BELOVED,

YOUR Brother sent me your letter from New-York, and most welcome it was! I had long counted the hours & days, hoped by that arrival to know our fate; but I am used to disappointment, & my heart, I suppose, is growing callous to such things as would formerly afflict it. By

## Recollections

this time you must know the event, unless some fresh stroke has interfered, & again put off the trial. Your poor Brother came to town on the third, since which time, he has not been on his feet. His spirits are good and last night he told me he was perfectly easy. I sat with him two hours, & was, as you may suppose, very importunate in asking Questions. Not of the kind his other visitors did.

I am willing that the generality of the world should do as they please, provided they do not interfere with the happiness of those I love. 'T is not a farthing's matter to me who is in or out of place, if I am unhappy. The political wheel will ever move with or without my notice, and rest satisfied that everything is for the best, while I am happy, which I now am, comparatively to what I was this time twelvemonth. . . . A thousand thanks to my dear Francis for his handy-work; I am very proud of your cap (a specimen of his tambouring). I hope you are now circumstanced as to be able to give me your picture without inconvenience. I should hate myself if I asked anything of you that was not proper from any cause, & therefore hope you'll not impute my request to any motive but the best.

As I am robbed of the only object that could please me, I wished for the resemblance.

Tubby is indeed like you, he ever was, & the evening he arrived, Brother and I went to see him for two or three hours, indeed I could scarce contain my feelings. The likeness was so strong that I could a thousand times have kissed him, & almost swallowed every word he spoke. Yet the painful reflection that you were so far, vastly overbalanced the pleasure. Yet I was glad he had returned to his native country.

## Tench Francis the Younger

*Philadelphia, the last of the year, 1768, late at night.*

MY DEAREST LIFE,

I HAVE just received your letter by the Packet, & finding that Mr Stewart goes off in the morning for Virginia, I can't avoid giving you a chance of hearing that we are all well; and though very greatly disappointed in not seeing you, yet we hope that you 'll bring in the New-Year happily. God grant that our troubles may end with '68! If you are so near Westover as to be able to stop there, you 'll find Dickey, who will make your journey home more agreeable to you; besides giving very great pleasure to a couple of sincere sympathising friends. God bless you, wherever you are! I need not write more to convince you of the sincerity of

Your very faithful

ANNE FRANCIS

TENCH FRANCIS TO ANNE FRANCIS.

*Falmouth, 23rd June, 1767.*

ARRIVED with Turbutt [his Brother] after a tedious, disagreeable voyage. We expected immediately to set out for London, & reach it in two days. . . .

*2nd July, London.*

. . . On H——'s business. His own case had been laid before Solicitor General Wells, who gave an opinion clearly in his favour; & Mr Yorke had been applied to; but he is so dilatory in his nature that he cannot tell when he shall have an opinion. Speaks of H——'s false assertions that his contracts were with the Government. His admitted debts amount to £102,000. . . .

The difficulty with my Grandfather was to meet his own bills, drawn on his remittances. He and his Brother lodged

## Recollections

with Mr Chambers, who treated them with all kindness. Tubby's physician told him his disorder was a dangerous inflammation of the blood. "They have been bleeding him two or three times a day, besides dosing him well with. . . . I have seen your Uncle who treats me like a Brother," etc., etc.

*London, July 11th, 1767.*

. . . New difficulties started by the creditors of H—— Your good Uncle & other friends advise me to place no further dependence on fine words & promises, but apply to Counsel & act offensively. Accordingly secured the services of Mr Grope, a solicitor who appears quite equal to the task he has undertaken.

*July 23rd.*

. . . Mr. Yorke's opinion decidedly against me. Nevertheless in hopes H—— will be able to divide 175 in the £.

[Speaks of improved health, & enjoying the climate. If his wife were with him, & he possessed what he thought he had twelve months ago, he never would return to the scorching heat of America.]

*August 4th, 1767.*

. . . My hard fortune will, I fear, detain me much longer than I at first flattered myself. Notwithstanding, I have this day gained a kind of victory over the Assignees, my most cruel & hard-hearted enemies. The Court has heard my petition, praying that H——'s certificate may be postponed till a future day, when it will be at my option to allow him one, or keep under my command. The latter I

## Tench Francis the Younger

shall most certainly do, unless he or his friends fall on some method to satisfy me that I shall be on a footing with every honest creditor, etc., etc.

*August 12th.*

MY ONLY LOVE,

KEEP up your spirits, with the fullest dependence on our being blest with something handsome, after satisfying all our creditors, and that by my industry, & your frugality, we may be able to live happier than we ever did; for the small cross incidents of life cannot give the least uneasiness after what we have suffered.

*October 3rd, 1767.*

. . . Tubby is getting flesh fast and promises to be very careful of his health. He will undoubtedly quit the army. Sir "somebody" has made him an offer of 800 guineas for his lieutenancy & he has agreed to take it. The person who buys it is to make interest for leave to sell. I mentioned in my last that Hagan's assistants have made a dividend of 6/8 in the pound; in a day or two I shall receive on £20,500—only part of the debt, as the accepted bills are . . .

*London, November 13th, 1767.*

[HE had just returned from Shropshire, where he had been to endeavour to make terms for the purchase of the Vineyard Estate. He offered £12,000 for upwards of 500 acres; it would be a noble purchase at 50 shillings an acre, and he would go a great deal further. Speaks of the increased value from the recent improvements of Zachary's Estate and the importance it would be to Mr Hamilton & Mr Penn to keep off neighbours from the gardens at Bush Hill &

## Recollections

Springettsbury] "Still disputing the Assignees of H — in Chancery. Mr Yorke still continues clear that he will carry me through, & if there is a just cause this side Heaven, mine is one, & surely a wise & righteous Judge will give his decree in my favour."

*December 11th, 1767.*

. . . Your Uncle is highly pleased with your letter to him. With tears in his eyes he swears my wife is the finest, best good creature in the world. I talk to him by the hour of you, & you don't know how it flatters my vanity to hear him sound your praises. Indeed I did not know I possessed such a treasure. Absence has opened my fond eyes, & my soul languishes for an opportunity of gratifying them with the sight of the object it dotes upon!

*February, 1768.*

NEW vexatious delays. A cross bill filed by the Assignees etc, and Mr Jones off his bargain about the Vineyard. Had made a purchase of land in the . . . paid £133, supposed to be worth £350. One of my friends, Chamber's Sister, is teaching me various kinds of netting, which on my return, I intend to instruct some of our girls in, provided they behave very submissively & kindly to me. She is also teaching me the method of working such flowers as you may have seen on muslins. It is done on what is called a Tambour, in a very expeditious manner. Enclosed is a letter to you from your most worthy Uncle & my kind friend; you'll observe his humanity & generosity have led him to order your Brother to give his Godson, our little infant, when he is a year old, five hundred pounds sterling. You see, my dearest love, what a friend

## Tench Francis the Younger

we have. Times are changing, & we shall never meet with another year as black as '67! Keep up your spirits, and all will be well as I said before—let Providence once more unite us, & bless us with health, & I'll venture to assert we cannot be unhappy! Ten times ten thousand blessings attend you & all around you!

[He sends various presents to the children, & others, & apricot trees grafted on pears, of the finest kind in England, which he is particular in directing the immediate planting of.]

*February 24th, 1768.*

MY DEAREST NANCY,

YOU cannot think how it distresses me that ship after ship is sailing, & that I am compelled to stay behind. No wretch in Siberia suffers more by banishment into that most inhospitable country, than your partner at this moment. I neither can nor will be much longer separated from the woman I adore! Indeed I'll see you in the course of next summer, if it please God to spare my life.

P.S. Relf is made a bankrupt. Now our accounts will be settled, & the world will see what he is!

*April, 1768.*

[Speaks of the arrival of his old master, Mr Coleman, in a low state, struggling with old age, gravel, & cancer.] "I am confident I shall gain my cause. Mr Nuttall, an intimate friend of Lord Camden, has talked to him on its merits, & from what I can learn, though Mr Nuttall will not speak plain, the Chancellor is clear in my favour. Things are drawing so near a conclusion, that I plainly see I shall get

## Recollections

15*s* in the pound—perhaps 17*s*—& if I recover my damages, and can, by some means or other, secure a good part of them to myself, matters may wind up tolerably well."

*July 4th, 1768.*

**K**NOW then, that within these few days, my cursed cause stood upward of thirty back, & that I despaired of having it heard this term, there being only four days more allowed to hear causes. After which a very long vacation till November takes place. This induced me once more to try my fortune, & petition the Lord Chancellor for a preference which he refused me last May. Previous to presenting my petition, I got my friend Mr Nuttall, secretary to the Chancery Court, & an intimate friend of my Lord Camden's to move in my favour. Accordingly, on Thursday last, when he dined with my Lord Chancellor at the "King's Arms," he took the advantage of making his request when the whole company were in the height of their jollity; most luckily for me, he succeeded, & some day this week, our fate will be determined. I cannot help being under the greatest anxiety for the issue of this most important affair, though I am clear that I will succeed, as of my existence. At present I scarce know whether I stand on my head or my heels. Jones's agent, after counselling with Mr Coleman, Mr Franklin & Sam Emlen, struck for a higher price, but finally agreed to take about £9, 15*s* per acre.

*July 9th.*

[ Final purchase of Vineyard at £5, 13*s* sterling per acre. £300 to pay Edward Jones to give possession. Speaks of young Fisher having been there at the time, & consulted

## Tench Francis the Younger

as to value. And was much delighted at the purchase.] “I mentioned in my last that my Lord Chancellor had ordered my cause for hearing on Thursday, when, after a trial of three hours, he gave a decree fully in my favour.”

*August.*

[Unexpected delays in settlements.] “Do not be impatient, but bless fortune that we are not reduced to total poverty. In a few years, by industry & frugality, we shall be able to retrieve what we have lost. Mr Biggin, a man of immense fortune, who has a contract for supplying the ships of war on the Jamaica Station, has promised to employ me to ship his bread, flour and pork from Philadelphia. He will send his orders in a few days to Tenny.” [Tilghman, partner of Tench Francis, & first cousin.]

It is not necessary to describe from invention the meeting of this loving couple. They had too much happiness to complain of the past, & set to work to restore their home, in a manner fitted to their altered fortunes. The house in Chestnut Street was rented for a short time to John Dickinson, & my Grand-parents established themselves on their new purchase. Although the only house they could inhabit contained but four rooms, this formed the kitchen of a comfortable mansion shortly afterwards erected, & strange to say, when the new house had become a ruin, this appendage remained, & was still inhabited by a tenant of my Mother’s, long after the estate was divided into the sites of “Francisville.”

The walls of the large brick house, two stories high, & with five windows on each story south, were still standing at the time of my earliest recollection. It must have been

## Recollections

a convenient & comfortable mansion. There, I think, my Aunt, Mrs Harrison & her Brother Charles, were born. My Grandfather was not so far from his place of business, that he could not give it his daily attention; but it would rather seem that disgusted with the mischances of Commerce, he gradually withdrew from it, to enjoy his favourite pursuits. He planted orchards & fruit trees, & introduced many novelties in foreign vegetables.

Old Anthony Morris, on the authority of the Annalist Watson, said he first brought the potato into general use, by importing a variety superior to any that had been previously known.

My Grandmother had her dairy & poultry-yard, & we may well suppose, her flowers.

Surrounded by the agreeable suburban society I have mentioned above, to which might be added that of Mrs Betty Lawrence, [sister of T. F.] whose country-seat was at Fairy Hill [now the central part of the cemetery of Laurel Hill afterwards Mr Pepper's place], we may suppose that the years which preceded our revolutionary war were passed in happiness unalloyed by anything but the threatening aspect of public affairs.

Part of the Vineyard Estate was sold by my Grandfather amongst other pieces, the Hill, now the central part of Fairmount Park, purchased by Robert Morris, in 1776. This was what on the old plots, one of which I once had, is called Old Vineyard Hill, & was the site of a vineyard planted by William Penn on his manor of Springettsbury; abandoned after several persevering efforts under French and Swiss Vignerones imported for the purpose, although wine is said in one of Penn's letters to his steward James Harrison, to have been really made there.

## Tench Francis the Younger

Robert Morris, it seems, had other lands nearer to the water-works; what my Grandfather sold him was only 19 acres, & the price obtained was £375 10s.



IV  
St. Peter's Church  
Philadelphia



# Recollections of St. Peter's Church

Fragment by H. M. F. and J. F. F.

*Written about 1869-70*

**J**FRANCIS FISHER was born in 1807, & his memory of events occurring in his boyhood and youth was unusually acute.

He had a shadowy recollection of an old man in brown velvet small-clothes, sitting in a corner of the old Willing pew (No. 41) when his Mother & he occupied seats inherited from his Grandmother, Anne Willing (Mrs Tench Francis). This old gentleman was Mr Thomas Willing, (brother of Anne Willing and Great-Uncle of J. F. F.)

He was one of the leading citizens of Philadelphia in Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary days.

Mr Gurney Smith, the Accounting Warden of St. Peter's, remembered this gentleman very distinctly, & recalled how, when another sister of Mr Willing, Mrs Elizabeth Powel, came into church as she invariably did about the middle of the service, Mr Willing would as invariably walk out into the aisle and hand Mrs Powel to her seat in the same pew, with a profound bow!

It is well known that this same Mrs Powel was often visited at her house on Third Street below Walnut Street by General Washington, and it may be that this was the origin of the tradition that the pew occupied by Mrs. Powel at St. Peter's Church was General Washington's pew.

For this tradition there is, so far as I know, no real foundation, as I believe there is no record of Washington's ever

## Recollections

having attended a service in St. Peter's, except on one occasion when he occupied a seat in the Proprietor's (Penn) pew in the South Gallery.

Bishop White was the God-father of J. Francis Fisher; having married a sister of Mr George Harrison, the Uncle by marriage of J. F. F. who had the highest regard for his really saintly character.

Of course the Bishop was very low church, & some of his practices would seem rather shocking to us now, such as the one of laying his hat & stick upon the altar or "communion table," as it used to be called, before opening the service. This, we were assured by the late Mr John Welsh, was his usual practice. He did not intend this for any disrespect, but no doubt the good Bishop had been brought up with rather Calvinistic traditions.

Attention should be called to the fact of St. Peter's, in old times, having been frequented by many old sea-captains.

"There were more 'old salts' with us than in any other Episcopal Church," and it was owing to this that the congregation was so constantly called to pray or give thanks for the seafarer.

"I think that there are more special prayers for the sick and afflicted than is usual elsewhere. Even thanks after childbirth are not infrequent. . . . We have I think always been an united congregation, steadfast in the faith, zealous in good works."

There is no reference to the rectors prior to Dr Abercrombie. "Dr Abercrombie had the discredit of being too ready to help runaway couples to their precarious happiness. He solemnized more clandestine marriages than any other really reputable clergyman of our Church, and was often reproached for it. But in his sore pecuniary straits

## St. Peter's Church

the fee was no doubt a strong temptation, and he knew there was always at hand a 'hedge priest' or Justice of the Peace to tie the knot as effectually and with much less respectability.

"I do not think he subjected himself to ecclesiastical censure in any case, and certainly the marriage, which excited the greatest storm of indignation, that of William Penn (son of Richard) to Miss B.—, a notorious courtesan, was a matter of obligation to him, if insisted on by the parties, as the lady and all her family, strange as it may seem, were members by baptism of St. Peter's Church, and she and Penn of full age.

"There was among the papers of Chief Justice Tilghman a letter which I have no doubt is still preserved, from Billy Penn to that worthy gentleman, entirely exonerating Dr Abercrombie, who had made all proper remonstrances and delays, and Bishop White always said he could not blame him in any way. It was of course a most offensive thing to the Penns but Richard Penn, who was a coarse man . . . took it no doubt more easily than our provincial society, where the ex-Proprietors and Governors were the head and front of the local *Noblesse*.

I was a pupil of Dr Abercrombie's at the old College building on Fourth Street, and afterwards read with him at his chambers, as much to give him a fee as to take lessons in elocution. He was very fond of me and I saw him from time to time in the decline of life. He came to one of my Wistar parties, and I recollect his contrasting the promiscuous feeding at these meetings with the much more genial ones round the hospitable mahogany of his friends, when, the cloth removed & thanks returned, even a clerical party offered no restraint to the feast of reason and the

## Recollections

flow of soul, or the circulation of that beverage which, as the vulgate hath it, ‘*Lætificat cor hominis.*’

“Perhaps he and still more some of his reverend friends such as Provosts Smith & Andrews enjoyed too much alien symposia, but they had no evening churches to attend and the morning found them none the worse. My poor old friend, sometime before his death, was obliged to retire from the Ministry on a small pension from the Church (as much as it could give). His gout and other infirmities made his last days very miserable. When I last saw him he was stretched on a sofa and said to me: ‘Alas! the dregs of life are very bitter!’ He was the last clergyman of the old school—missed more in society than in the church, but nevertheless a loss to both, for who will venture to deny that the frequent presence of our clergy at scenes of innocent conviviality rather was calculated to restrain than to sanction excesses, and tended in some degree to remove prejudices on both sides.

“Of the successors of Dr Abercrombie, either as assistant ministers or rectors, I have nothing particular to say.

“The Clarksons sat in the South Gallery above our pew (No. 41), the principal representative of the family in my day being old Samuel Clarkson, son of Dr Gerardus Clarkson, one of the oldest of our Church Wardens, himself a worthy, but broken and poverty-stricken man. His son, Samuel, was one of my intimate friends at school.

“In the North Gallery were the Kuhns, but I think the doctor was not in my time. His Grand-children sit there now [1870].

“In the middle aisle, south side, sat the family of Captain Miercken, one of the fattest races I ever knew, but they were not the original occupants.

## St. Peter's Church

“Next, the pew of the Craig family, where sat the venerable old ladies, the last surviving belles of the Meschianza, and their niece, the excellent Mrs Nicholas Biddle, & her sunny-faced husband, in the days of his prosperity and power as President of the Bank of the United States.

“There too, sat, to the frequent distraction of my thoughts, the lovely Jane Sarmiento, whose eyes had no parallel beneath the stars! [She married first, Mr Craig, and after his death, the late Edward Biddle. Her son, Mr Edward Biddle, is still living.]

“The third pew was occupied by the family of Captain Donaldson, who are still its owners.” [J. F. F. recalled that once when he was a small boy he had climbed up upon theseat and pulled old Captain Donaldson’s longqueue, who was sitting with his back to him in the adjoining pew, and to his having received a scowl and growl from the old sea dog!] ]



V

Family Friends



## Family Friends

MY Uncle, George Harrison, was born in Philadelphia in 1761, at his Father's house, on the west side of Front between Market & Arch Streets, a large comfortable mansion, which forty years ago, was still standing, tho' altered into a store. It was then occupied by Samuel Archer, & has since been entirely demolished.

His Father owned other property in that vicinity; I remember a row of houses, Pewter Platter, which my Uncle often pointed out to me, as part of his inheritance, which he *spent* in Paris. My Uncle took me when a boy, more than once to these haunts of his childhood, & shewed me the Coffee House & Bradford's Printing Office, etc; & the residences in that neighbourhood of families long extinct —of the Masters, of Chief Justice South of New-Jersey, of Joseph Turner, and others.

Henry Harrison was a merchant of high character, an Englishman by birth, who, like so many other of the early merchants of our City, came to Philadelphia as the captain & owner of his ship. From this he was afterwards known as Captain Harrison. The Quaker inhabitants, who had any natural sense of courtesy, being always glad to have an official prefix—even a military title, rather than use the proscribed term “master,” or be reduced to the familiarity of the “given” name! He filled for a long time a place in the City Councils,—was Alderman,—and finally Mayor; I had once in my possession, now, unluckily, lost, a bill of the Civic Feast, given by him in that capacity, at the Indian King Tavern, in Market below Third. The place where Franklin's Junto Club held their symposiums. The bill being in the name of the widow, Mary Biddle, & re-

## Recollections

ceipted by Charles Biddle, the Father of Nicholas S' who managed the Tavern for his Mother, & kept her accounts.

Henry Harrison died a young man; his wife was Mary, daughter of Matthias Aspden, an English merchant of some wealth & good descent, who died in Philadelphia in 1765, leaving one son, Matthias, the half-brother of Mary Harrison, who went to England & accumulated great wealth.

His leaving his estate by his strange Will to his *heir-at-law*, was the occasion of nearly thirty years' litigation in England & America. The memoranda of which may be found in the Paper-Book in my possession, of more than 1,200 large Octavo pages.

Matthias J' was possibly illegitimate, tho' his parents were subsequently married; but this Will which was intended to guard against the question of his legitimacy being raised, probably, in its simple designation of his *heir*, contrived for more litigation than any legal ingenuity could have devised in the interests of the profession.

It seems likely that he supposed that his Father's only child *was* his "heir-at-law," which technically he was not, in England, & in Pennsylvania only one of many, where our testamentary Code admits all half-bloods to an equal share. This miserly old man, whose death was hastened from the want of the usual comforts of life, died in wretched lodgings in London in 1826. He left a great estate afterwards divided among some scores of individuals, of whose existence he could have had no conception, the progeny of his Mother by a former marriage; the descendants of Mary Harrison taking upwards of \$100,000, of which my Uncle's share was one third. This he gave up to the children & grandchildren of his Brothers & Sisters, of which

## Family Friends

I, as his administrator l. b. n. had to make the final distribution.

Henry Harrison left five children, Joseph, who died s.p.—Matthias who married first, Rebecca Francis, daughter of Colonel Turbutt Francis, & secondly Rebecca Waln,—Mary, married the Rev<sup>rd</sup> William White, afterwards first Bishop of Pennsylvania,—& Anne, who married William Paca, of Maryland, who was Governor of that State, & one of the delegates to the Congress of 1776, who signed the Declaration of Independence.

Mrs Harrison was a strong adherent of the House of Brunswick, & called her youngest son George, after the Prince of Wales, whose birth & christening had been just announced. George was, I presume, a favourite son of his Mother, & much indulged. He was very handsome, very gay, & as well as I can gather, beloved by everybody. His School-days were not very laborious and coming in troublous times were much interrupted. He has often spoken to me of his boyhood, of his pets which were numerous, of his school days, I fancy not very profitably spent at the old Academy in Fourth St. under, I believe, Doctor Ewing, where I was taught many years after by my kind old master Doctor Abercrombie. My Uncle John Francis was probably a school mate and William Coxe; for his affectionate intimacy with them seemed to date from his boyhood, and he grew up if not a good Churchman, at least with an intense dislike to the Quakers, which in spite of some personal and devoted friendships for members of that Society, continued to his end. His Mother took him regularly to Christ Church of which his Father had been a Warden; where with all the sound preaching of Doctor Peters, and

## Recollections

the eloquence of Doctor Duché, whose oratorical reading I have often heard him describe, I am afraid the high pews concealed many a nap or bore evidence of an early taste for carving. I have often heard him piteously describe the cold in winter; for the church which was paved throughout even when I first knew it, with all the aisles laid with flat tombstones, had then not even a stove to warm it. But the old ladies had their foot-stoves and hand-warmers which I suppose imparted but little warmth to the unfortunate children.

I am sorry to say my dear Uncle grew up with little of what is now considered the requisite for a religious character. His Sister's Husband, the Reverend William White, whom he dearly loved and entirely honoured, did not, I am sure, think much the worse of him for this deficiency. In his boyhood he was constantly with him & his Sister to whom he was tenderly attached, made her home a second home to him during his single life.

The relations between the Brothers-in-law was, I may say of my own knowledge, most affectionate and confidential, & the intercourse constant, and well did my Uncle merit every kindness from his Sister's Husband & their children; for never was there a more generous Uncle or more efficient friend than he proved to all of them through life!

The Revolutionary War and the occupation of Philadelphia by the British, no doubt interrupted his education. He was much in the Country at a place his Father had on the Ridge Road, then extending to the romantic banks of the Schuylkill, where it was often a pleasure for me to accompany him on my Aunt's horse, Greybeard, to a bare rock projecting far into the river, opposite Solitude, John Penn's Cottage, and listen to his stories of his boyhood & his sports on the Schuylkill.

## Family Friends

He was also frequently at Governor Paca's, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, & it is not unlikely there formed his intimacy with Robert Milligan & James A. Bayard, with whose descendants & especially those of the former, his intimacy was long kept up.

That elegant old lady Miss Kitty Milligan, who lived past ninety & survived my Uncle, not only spoke of his youthful life, but had good reason to value the friendship then formed. My good friend Miss Bordely also told me that she recollects him at her Father's house on Wye Island, & joined in the universal tribute to his fascinations.

When my Uncle was about twenty years old, the War being nearly over, but the stagnation of business stopping all enterprise, he started for France, & remained there till after the Peace. He placed himself in a Counting-House at Nantes where he acquired a knowledge of Commercial Affairs, & learnt the French language which he retained through life, speaking it with fluency & as I have been assured with an excellent accent. He afterwards went to Paris where he was most kindly received by our Representative, Doctor Franklin, then residing at Passy.

I have often heard him describe a scene in the Philosopher's drawing-room, when one of the most elegant women of Paris rushed in & kissed him on both cheeks!

He was taken to Court and saw Louis the XVI and his lovely Queen dining in public, & he brought away a strong impression of the splendid scene at Versailles, & the elegance and grace which distinguished that brilliant Court. It was here no doubt he caught the courtly grace which marked him through life & completed his education by those accomplishments which made him the most elegant man in our American Society, when something of a

## Recollections

Court was formed under our first and greatest President.

He travelled a little on the Continent in company with his townsman, Doctor Foulke, who was afterwards the Physician of his family, a pleasant companion, who had among other amusing talents that of drawing caricatures, of which some specimens are still preserved. He met also Doctor Samuel Powel Griffitts who had gone to Europe to perfect his medical studies. His Uncle, Mr Samuel Powel, who then looked upon him as his probable heir, had sent him abroad, partly to wean him from Quakerism, & although the young man in Paris wore a bright coat and sword as William Penn did at his age, his convictions like those of that great man had been too deep to be erased. He became again on his return to America what Pepys called "that melancholy thing, a Quaker" and put on drab again to the great disgust of his Uncle and the result of his own disinheritance. This early friendship formed in Paris continued. In my early days, Doctor Griffitts was my Uncle's family physician and seemed to like to recall, on his professional visits, scenes so opposite to the habits of his after life. He was a most excellent man and I always doubted whether my venerable but *not* venerated Aunt, Mrs Powel, consulted the wishes of her Husband in postponing him to her handsome Nephew and namesake.

My Uncle went afterwards to England where his Uncle Aspden was then residing with whom he seemed to be quite a favourite.

I do not recollect his describing anything to me but a Court Ball, to which Mr Richard Penn procured his entrance, where the Prince of Wales, then just of age, led out his Sister, the Princess Mary, in a minuet, and was thought by him, as by all the people of England, the

## Family Friends

handsomest and most graceful Prince that had ever figured in such an Assembly. My Uncle was a good judge of such things. I also recollect his describing the old King and Queen at Windsor, walking on the terrace and surrounded by their large and handsome family of children, a sight which rejoiced the heart and elevated the loyalty of Britons, who never would have believed how little the royal example of domestic virtues would profit those who most should benefit by it.

My Uncle's acquaintances were not in high life. His letters to leading Merchants and the great brewers, the Barclays, procured kind attentions, but did not render a residence in England attractive. Successful Rebels, too, were not special favourites, & as I presume his resources were pretty well exhausted on the Continent, (altho' his tour did not I think extend beyond the Netherlands & Holland, in which latter country he met with some amusing adventures, which were laughable as he told them, but are not remembered by me with sufficient accuracy to repeat) he returned home after an absence of five years, to enter into business in his native city. His old friends received him kindly & promoted his views.

He was quite a favorite with Robert Morris, the ruling character in our financial & commercial world, who was about sending to China the first American ship which left our Port. He had purchased the federal frigate *Alliance*, and planned a voyage to the China Seas, requiring a long detour south of the island of New Holland, a course long marked on all maps; a Captain Jones commanded; R. Dale was first Officer, afterwards Commodore; my Uncle was supercargo. The voyage was one of prodigious length, the ship almost rotten; they were six months without touch-

## Recollections

ing land. The scurvy made great ravages. At last they arrived; and with the thoughtlessness of youth, my Uncle returned in this dangerous craft. Her main timbers were so decayed that she was never tried again, but left a wreck on Polly's Island, where I well recollect her skeleton timbers of perhaps a more durable material. Sea life & its adventures always seemed to please my Uncle, he enjoyed his visit to China, saw more of it than most visitors were then permitted to do.

I remember well his description of Formosa & the manners & customs there which he had some opportunity of witnessing.

I presume his management of the adventure gave great satisfaction to his employer, for he retained his confidence & patronage for the rest of his career; & unluckily was involved in the ruin of his patron, whose downfall crushed all his friends, & brought suffering throughout the community; the recollection of which was not effaced by the consequences of Jefferson's Embargo—the crash of 1815, or the suspension of the United States Bank.

In the year 1790, he was married to my Aunt, Sophia Francis. It had been a long attachment, dating from before the voyage to China; but the marriage did not meet the wishes of my Grandfather, Tench Francis, who objected to him not so much on account of want of fortune, as from his previous career as a man of fashion & pleasure. The marriage was performed in a strict family privacy, many of the nearest relations not being invited; partly owing perhaps to the death a few days before of his Brother Matthias' first wife, who was a niece of my Grandfather, being the daughter of his Brother, Turbutt Francis.

This Matthias took very ill, & it was supposed in con-

## Family Friends

sequence of this, for no other reason could be imagined, he broke off all intercourse with his Brother, which was never renewed till he was about to die, when he sent for my Uncle, & committed to him the protection of the interests of his family, distrusting, as he well might do, his Son-in-law, James McMurtrie.

My Uncle had been the leading man of fashion in Philadelphia, remarkable for his elegant dress, his graceful dancing, his courteous manners, which with his great personal beauty, made him an universal favourite. I have heard many old ladies speak with enthusiasm of what he was in his youth, & could well credit their praises by all I observed in old age. He was the leading manager of the Dancing Assemblies, where our society contained all that was distinguished in American society. He was sought for as a partner for the young debutantes, who in those days made their entrée into society by dancing the first Minuet at the Assemblies. I never saw anyone make a more graceful bow, or enter a room with more dignity & grace. He used to give me instructions as a child, in presenting myself to a large company, arranging the chairs & shewing me how to approach the lady & master of the house, & then make my salutations to the rest of the company. Alas! his instructions were comparatively thrown away, in this as in horsemanship. He was an admirable rider & driver, & appeared well on horseback, or with the reins of a pair, or four horses. He was never, however, a frequenter of the turf nor the associate of sportsmen in any sense, nor addicted to any low or dangerous vice, abhorring play, & abstaining with great self-denial from the excesses of conviviality then so general. He held gambling & drunkenness in especial abhorrence; & because his

## Recollections

eldest Brother Joseph, a bachelor, had fallen into the latter vice, & was still an inmate of his Mother's house, he could not bear to live with him, but took lodgings at what was then a very genteel boarding-house, kept by a Mrs Wilson, at the south-east corner of Walnut & Dock Streets — a queer old house now replaced by Offices. There he became a general favourite, especially of some of the members of Congress who lodged there. Here began his intimacy with Governor Langdon, who became his life-long friend, and transmitted an intimacy which I enjoy to this day with his descendants, the children of his only daughter, Mrs Elwyn. Perhaps at this house, but more likely at the table of Robert Morris, he became intimate with Gouverneur Morris, a most fascinating companion, but rather a dangerous example.

Robert Morris' house was made particularly attractive by its hospitalities. His table was profuse & luxurious. After Gouverneur Morris returned from France, he brought many secrets of the French cuisine, which he imparted to Mrs Robert Morris, but he was not a relation, only an intimate friend.

I have a seal, on which is engraved a “herisson” or hedge-hog, which was presented to my Uncle by Gouverneur Morris; a sort of *punning* crest, which was adopted for a time by him. My Uncle never claimed any sort of Arms, or adopted his Wife's, but invented or altered one to suit his taste. He always laughed at all ridiculous pretension to heraldic distinction or ancestral descent, to which he knew so few of his country-men had any right. He could have proved his Mother's right as an Aspden to such a distinction, but I doubt whether he cared anything for his ancestors, or knew much until the great law-suit, referred

## Family Friends

to above, rendered it necessary to have his pedigree on one side. His birth and education placed him in the first society of his country, & he aspired to nothing better.

As an evidence of his fascination, I may mention an anecdote I have often heard of him. Previous to his marriage in 1790, he made a journey to South Carolina, stopping in Virginia, he presented to my Great-Aunt, Mrs Mary Byrd, the Widow of Colonel Byrd of Westover, a letter from her Sister, my Grandmother Francis.

She was still living at that noble old family residence, on the James River, shorn of its princely revenues, & kept up with diminished splendour. The reckless expenses & gambling of her Husband, & the subsequent devastations & losses by the War of the Revolution, having brought down the style of living to a becoming simplicity & economy. Still, the lady of the mansion, whose dignity would have become a palace & the memory of whose noble character is still preserved in many Virginia traditions, lived there in state, exercising a certain hospitality which was quite imposing to her young visitor, who was about to become the husband of her niece. Mrs Byrd's eldest daughter had the previous year married Mr Harrison of Brandon, and was at that time at Westover, & about to be confined. Such were the charms of my Uncle's manners & appearance that she determined to give his name to her first-born son, altho' none of his ancestors had borne the name of George.

From that time to the present, the possessor of Brandon (thought to be the finest estate on James River, since Westover was divided & sold on the death of my Great-Aunt) has always been a George Harrison, & the name, I have reason to believe, has been most worthily supported.

## Recollections

My Grandmother favoured the marriage with her daughter, & never was there a connection more fraught with blessings, not only to the parties, but to the whole family. A more kind & affectionate son-in-law to my Grandmother in her widowhood, never was, in fact, he was more to her than her own sons. To his Wife's Brothers he was an efficient friend, & to my Mother, in her widowhood, everything that a Brother could be.

So far from being spoilt by social successes, he proved a most successful man of business; active, intelligent, & methodical, always an economist, & always generous.

In his domestic economy he had the invaluable aid of my Aunt, brought up by my admirable Grandmother Francis, of whom I hope to give an account elsewhere.

They lived, on their marriage, at a very small house in Third Street, directly opposite the almost princely establishment of the Binghams. My Aunt was most intimate with her cousin, Mrs Bingham, and both were the constant guests at their house when it received the most distinguished society that was assembled in America at that time; & they were not ashamed to reciprocate hospitalities, altho' the contrast of their furniture & table was very great. But I am inclined to think Mr Bingham's French cook gave less satisfaction to the Convives than Hannah Carney did to my Aunt's guests. She was the best of old-fashioned Maryland cooks. She was still with my Aunt during my childhood, & I have a vivid recollection of her dainties.

My Uncle was in the Madeira trade, and imported the finest wines, some remains of which are still in my garrets. He was an excellent judge, & did not think Mr Bingham's contained the best, tho' they had a great name in my day, when sold.

## Family Friends

I have often heard him & my Aunt speak of Mr Bingham's house & stable. The house built after the plan of the Duke of Manchester's in London, where they were frequent guests, stood back from Third Street on the west side above Spruce. The gardens extended to Fourth Street & along Third Street to the south, about half a square.

The next neighbour to the north was my Aunt, Mrs Powel, then Chief Justice Chew, & then Mr Willing, the Father of Mrs Bingham, opposite St Paul's Church, now occupied by the Pennsylvania Railroad building. On the north side of Willing's Alley & Fourth Street, was the house built & occupied by my Uncle, Thomas Willing Francis, north of that the gardens of Lawyer Lewis' house, formerly Judge Wilson's, the scene of the attack of the Mob in 1777. This was then the fashionable part of the town. Below Spruce Street was General Stewart's still standing; between Union & Pine Street was Governor McKean's. On the south east corner of Pine & Third, Mr Stampfer's large house; below Third in Pine Street, Dr Blackwell's, who married Mr Bingham's Sister, an English lady; Colonel Morris's etc., in Union Street, Mr Bordeley's, (Father of Mrs Gibson) corner of Union & Second, the McCall mansion, nearly opposite the Bond's. Many of our best people lived in Second Street north of Pine. In Fourth Street, Chief Justice Shippen, Dr Shippen, & Joseph Shippen. This was the very centre of fashion, altho' there was a movement up Market Street & Chestnut Street. There were no residences above Seventh, when Robert Morris, before his catastrophe, began his Château after the model of a great French private Hotel. It was in the midst of fields. His own residence had been in Market Street below Sixth, which he had bought from the Masters' Es-

## Recollections

tate, & which he resigned to General Washington during his Presidency, occupying himself the house of Joseph Galloway, at the south-east corner of Market & Sixth Streets.

My Uncle & Aunt subsequently occupied a house in Walnut St above Fourth, still standing, & finally in 1794 or 5, purchased of George Clymer, the two-storied house in Chestnut Street below Seventh in which he lived till his death, & my Aunt afterwards, & bequeathed to me. I too spent one year in it with my family, till it was seriously damaged by a neighbouring fire, & was so encroached on by places of business, that with the most extreme reluctance, I decided to pull it down & erect on its site those three brown-stone stores which are still my property. [Now part of the Curtis Building. s. c. 1927.]

This house, widely known by its number 156, was a delightful residence, with almost half an acre of ground in yard and garden. It was built by Mr Clymer, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, after a plan that was said to be designed by Mr Jefferson and which, if so, was the best of that gentleman's architectural achievements. It had every possible convenience, except the modern ones (of Gas & Furnaces) which would have added neither to its elegance nor comfort. The two fine Parlours opening upon the large & beautiful garden to the South, with almost a rural aspect, were for fifty years the resort of all the most charming people in Philadelphia society. The partial record of hospitalities in my Uncle's Memoranda has served to recall the names of many distinguished guests, & many an elegant entertainment at which in my childhood, I was present, running in from the garden unexpectedly, or called for as the child of the family to par-

## Family Friends

take of dessert, or be fondled by the ladies in the Drawing-room.

Thus my memory carries me back for more than fifty years to scenes & company such as never since have existed in Philadelphia, which was then the favourite resort of accomplished and highly educated people from different parts of our own country & of the old World.

Many of the Representatives of Foreign Sovereigns had their residences there, only going to Washington for a part of the winter. It was then a most uncomfortable residence, bleak, windy, with unpaved muddy or dusty Avenues, houses ill-built, detached, and cold; markets wretched, & the place itself of most difficult access, through miry, clay roads. But with all this, more attractive far, than the Washington of our days, when honour & refinement, even honesty & decency, are banished from our Legislative Halls!

My Uncle's house, my dear old home, the Paradise of my childhood, as old Louisa, my nurse, called it, was when he purchased it, the most western private residence on Chestnut Street, or any other.

The paved streets only reached to it; beyond were open fields! Opposite a little to the east, was the broad double house standing back, which was pulled down to build the Arcade in 1825. There some years before the Chevalier de Luzerne gave a splendid Fête to do honour to the newborn Dauphin, erecting a large temporary building for the Banquet, towards Sixth Street, on the ground for a long time occupied by the old Theatre. [This Mansion was then occupied by the French Minister.]

To the East of my Uncle's was the large building for the Episcopal Academy, afterwards an Hotel. To the East

## Recollections

of this was a large wooden building used as a circus & rented by Ricketts. In this circus, which communicated with the Hotel was given a great banquet to General Washington, when he came during the Adams administration, to take command of the Army about being organised for the expected War with France. I have heard this dinner described by my Uncle, who presided at one of the tables. This was the last visit of that great man to Philadelphia.

The French Minister's house became soon after the residence of my Mother's Cousin, Chief Justice Tilghman, who lived there until 1825.

Rickett's Circus took fire in 1799, & the flames extended to, and consumed, the Hotel adjoining—east of my Uncle's house, which was in imminent danger, but the roof being covered with snow, & blankets & carpets being kept constantly wet by my Aunt & old Louisa, who was then a girl of fifteen. My Mother had a dancing party that evening at her Father's house in Market Street, & my Aunt was hurried down in her ball dress. The gentlemen from the ball-room did not wait to doff their small clothes, & silk stockings, but worked valiantly with the fire buckets, for hose were not then extant. A jolly supper no doubt celebrated their success, but every heart was saddened at hearing the next morning of the death of General Washington! Every heart, at least, not embittered by partisan strife; for there were Democrats who rejoiced at the news!

Singularly enough, our old Louisa was in the same house in 1851, (December) when it was so nearly destroyed by the conflagration of Barnum's Museum, in the Swain Building, to the West of 156.

The site of the Hotel was, soon after 1799, built upon, giving space for four houses, into the nearest of which, my

## Family Friends

Grandmother Francis moved, after her Husband's death, & there I was born on February 17th, 1807. Mrs Powel about the same time built the handsome & commodious house west of Chief Justice Tilghman's.

Early in the Century Mr Morris' house was pulled down, & its space occupied by the row of houses between 7th & 8th on the south side of Chestnut Street, in one of which I lived 39 years, from the death of my Grandmother in 1812, to that of my Aunt in 1851.

But I am running far away from my story. I hope however my garrulity will be pardoned.

When my Uncle was married, Third Street was the centre of fashion. My Aunt's cousin, Mrs Bingham had opened her elegant mansion, and received in a style which she was able to copy from the finest establishments of Europe. Her husband was Senator of the United States, & one of the wealthiest of our citizens. A very gentlemanly person too, I believe, altho' born of very humble stock; was lavish of his wealth, acquired, some thought, in a discreditable way, partly in privateering, & speculating in Government warrants; for in those days, many thought fair & intelligent enterprises & honourable industry, the only proper foundations to fortune.

His beautiful wife, & her sisters, some of whom were as handsome as herself, attracted to her drawing-room all that was distinguished & accomplished in the country; for Washington was the President, & Congress was filled by the most eminent men the country possessed.

Their families too, all people of culture & refinement, if not elegance, crowded the Capital City. Men of talent & distinction, representing the Powers of Europe, were there with their wives & daughters; and travellers, en-

## Recollections

thusiasts for Liberty, or propelled by curiosity to see the young Republic of the West! Officers who had fought in our victorious Armies & made our country their home, Representatives of the great Commercial houses, come to establish relations of business, & last of all the emigration from France, flying from the horrid scenes of the Revolution, but with characteristic nationality, throwing off sorrow & sadness, & enjoying gayety & pleasure wherever it could be found.

Many of these had been known by the Binghams in Europe, & all were received with cordial hospitality.

Louis Philippe d'Orleans, became enamoured of Mrs Bingham's sister, Abby, who was afterwards Mrs Peters, but my great-uncle, Mr Thomas Willing, would not consent to the marriage unless it should be sanctioned by the Dowager Duchess, which of course it was not.\*

Mr Bingham's youngest daughter, Maria, was inveigled into a marriage with the Count de Tilly, a profligate, but very handsome & fascinating young Frenchman, who had been a page to Marie Antoinette.

It was a shocking and scandalous affair, & created at the time a prodigious sensation in the highest circles. De Tilly, however, was ready to be bought off. He was bribed to furnish evidence against himself and the divorce was obtained

\* It is said that when Louis Philippe asked Mr Thomas Willing for the hand of his daughter, Abigail, he answered, "Sir, in your present condition you are not a good enough match for my daughter—and should you return to France to live, she would not be a good enough match for you!" When, many years later, Abigail Willing's two daughters, Nancy and Sally Peters, visited the chapel in Paris where Louis Philippe and his family are buried, the guardian, who had been an old retainer in the Orleans family, spoke to Miss Nancy and said, "Oh, Madame, que vous ressemblez à la Reine!" This coincidence is interesting as the likeness between Queen Amélie and Abigail Willing had often been mentioned.

## Family Friends

by influence with the Legislature of Pennsylvania, whether by corruption, I am not able to say, but in those days Legislatures were presumed to be unassailable in that way.

Rhode Island was then the State which had the unenviable notoriety of an easy conscience in that respect, and some scandalous divorces were procured there, as now in some of our northwestern States.

Mr Greenleaf, who married Nancy Allen, a celebrated beauty of the day, my Aunt's Cousin, and as a girl, her intimate friend, procured his release from marriage with a Dutch lady, by feeing all the Lawyers of the Rhode Island Bar, & summoning his wife to appear in a month. The affair was disgraceful to all parties, & caused a rupture in family relations.

De Tilly's love affair, marriage, & divorce, are all told in his own Memoirs, published many years afterwards. A book not fit for any library, & giving a curious picture of the profligacy of the court of Louis XVI.

Maria Bingham afterwards married Henry Baring,—was divorced from him, on account of an amour with Captain Webster, the son of Sir Godfrey Webster, & the lady afterwards Lady Holland, who was herself an American, of the great Vassall family, and was divorced from Sir Godfrey after the birth of her first son by Lord Holland, who could not take his father's title. Mr Vassall's fortune was enormous, & the husband of his daughter was compelled to take the name of Vassall. I knew Lady Holland at Holland House in 1831, & her son, Colonel Fox, who dined there, & was a handsome, & I believe an honourable man. His wife, Lady Mary Fox, was also there. She was the daughter of King William IV, by Mrs Jordan, & was permitted to take the

## Recollections

style of Lady Mary, when her brother was ennobled by the title of Lord Munster.

After Maria Bingham's second divorce, she married a Marquis de Blaizel, a Frenchman in the Austrian Service, and a Chamberlain of the Emperor. I knew her in Paris, then an old woman, but quite an amusing one. She had seen the world in many phases, and had plenty of anecdotes which she told pleasantly. She was a very amiable, kind-hearted woman, and her faults and frailties were attributable in some measure to neglect, and the bad company into which she was thrown. Her mother devoted to fashion, and incessantly occupied with company, left her daughter to the instruction of a French governess, who had been an actress, & was probably bought by de Tilly. Henry Baring, who could have had no sense of honour or delicacy in marrying her, which he no doubt did for her fortune, threw her into the most dissipated company, was glaringly unfaithful himself, and it is said, laid a plan for her divorce, when he had fallen in love with a young lady who became his second wife. Whether Captain Webster knowingly lent himself to his friend's scheme, I know not. The poor lady was unhappy with her third husband, who was a gambler, and always in want of money which she could not supply in sufficient sums to satisfy him, for Henry Baring had managed to retain the greater part of her fortune.

She lived in rather an equivocal position in Paris. She was received at the Austrian Ambassador's, but not at the English Embassy. The public trial in England was a stigma which the most notorious profligacy, not certified in court, did not affix. I think Louis Philippe refused her the *entrée* of the Palais Royal; tho' this was probably the act of his

## Family Friends

virtuous wife, otherwise he would not have shunned the daughter of the hospitable house where the exiled French Princes were so honourably entertained.

Anne Bingham, the eldest daughter, married Alexander Baring, about the year 1795, and lived, I think, in the house which was, or had been Aunt Powel's in Third Street, where her three eldest children were born, the 2nd and 3rd Lords Ashburton, and a daughter, Mrs. Mildmay.

About the time of her mother's death, she went to England, and never returned. Her husband became the head of the great house of Baring Brothers, acquired an enormous fortune, was a member of the House of Commons, where his financial abilities gave him great weight. He held the patronage of two Boroughs, for one of which he sat, returning his two sons to Parliament for another,—Thetford, I believe. He was in the beginning, a Whig, but at the time of the Reform Bill, took the side of the Tories and his own interest, and if the Duke of Wellington could have sustained himself in 1831 would have been his Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was afterwards created Lord Ashburton, was sent to America to settle the Boundary question, in which, having the advantage of treating with Mr Webster, he settled with great judgement and adroitness. I saw him in England in 1831–32, and considered him one of the most sensible persons I ever listened to. His wife received me with politeness, and even kindness, but she had the reputation of heartlessness. She was not yet a peeress, and was very ambitious of high social position. She met with many mortifications, and from nobody so great as from her son's wife, Lady Harriett and her proud family, that of the Earl of Sandwich. I am told that at the son's wedding, she was not invited to the Déjeuner! Cer-

## Recollections

tainly Lady Harriett, who was the most perfect example of insolent ill-breeding I ever saw, treated the poor old lady in her own house at the Grange, with great coolness, if not impertinence.

Perhaps, at the time I was there, there may have been a political feud. Alexander Baring had turned both his sons out of their seats in his Borough, for voting the Reform Bill, and I was told was caricatured as Brutus sacrificing his two sons for the good of his country!

They are all dead now, at least the parents, their eldest son, and his proud wife; and the title is now held, with I presume, nearly all the Estate, by Francis Baring, the second son, a man of more than ordinary intellect, but with a bad temper, & very disagreeable manners. He married a very handsome French woman, daughter of Maret, Duke of Bassano, Bonaparte's Secretary of State, and has chiefly resided in Paris. His son was in this Country some years since, & came over with Henry Fisher, with whom he was staying, to pay a visit to Alverthorpe. I knew Francis Baring slightly, and also his sister Mrs Mildmay, who seemed a most pleasing amiable woman, the only one of the family who did not seem to avoid the subject of American kinsfolk. I make some excuse for the reserve or recognition by the rest, but not for slighting Mrs T. W. Francis, their aunt; for they must have well recollect ed the affection in which she was held by Mrs Baring, their mother.

Mrs Bingham's only son William was an infant when she died; & after remaining some time at his grandfather Willing's, he was sent to England to school. I suppose there was not much to be made of his poor capacity, but it was thought he was neglected by his sisters, & when he returned to this country upon his majority, about 1820, he

## Family Friends

had contracted bad habits at school, and as few acquirements as possible. His great fortune was probably his greatest misfortune. He got into all sorts of scrapes in this country, became engaged to Miss Dawson, afterwards Mrs James Coleman, who was a very handsome person, & afterwards proved herself a very sensible one; but the Willing family were quite indignant, & contrived to break the engagement.

William Bingham went afterwards to Canada, where he married a beautiful girl of the Provincial Noblesse, a Mademoiselle de Lotbinière. She was just out of a Convent, & the marriage was arranged for them, for otherwise she could not have married so coarse a man as William Bingham.

He had sense enough to know he could not take care of his Estate, & was glad to have settlements made which put him under the controul, in a measure, of his wife, who turned out a pretty shrewd manager.

They lived for some years in the best style at Montreal where their house was open to all gay people, especially the Officers of the English Regiments. The opportunities of intrigue were not lost, and William Bingham admitted that he was only certain of the legitimacy of his eldest son.

They afterwards went to Paris, where Madame, still handsome in mature years, and after her hair had become grey, lived a most scandalous life, changing her lovers with the fashions or seasons, & he sank into drunkenness and imbecility, was scarcely seen, and certainly was not presentable in his own house.

Their daughters, *or hers*, married Frenchmen with some pretensions to rank, who now enjoy their fortune.

The sons are, I think, dead, the oldest leaving an heir,

## Recollections

who is I believe in England, now arrived at the French period of *Dévotion*.

The brilliant career of the family in Philadelphia was brief; from Mr Bingham's return from Europe, with his beautiful young wife, to her death in 1798. She took a severe cold in a sleighing party, where she exposed herself too soon after the birth of her son, was attacked by lung fever, & went in an almost dying state to the Bermudas, which she did not live to reach.\*

Her brokenhearted husband soon afterwards went to England, where he died in 1804.

I remember well their charming residence, standing back on Third Street, with gardens all around it to the south on Spruce Street, and westward to Fourth Street. All that remains of the establishment are the spacious stables at the head of Bingham's Court.

The Drawing-rooms & Parlour with Mrs Bingham's Boudoir & State Bed-chamber, occupied the second floor, to which you ascended by a broad stone staircase, wide enough for plants & flowers on each side on Gala occasions.

The banqueting rooms & Library were on the ground floor. I have never seen any private house more admirably adapted for the reception of company, & certainly there never was in our country a series of such distinguished reunions.

Brilliant Balls, sumptuous dinners, and constant receptions. The house open to all distinguished residents and strangers.

The President's house in Market Street was small, & General Washington refused the mansion built for him in

\* She is buried in the churchyard at St. George's, Bermuda. Mr Bingham is buried in Bath Abbey, England.

## Family Friends

Ninth Street by the City of Philadelphia; afterwards appropriated to the use of the University of Pennsylvania, a stately building which many can recollect.

Mr Robert Morris, who never completed his great Hotel, occupied a house of about 30 feet front in Market Street, the S. E. corner of Sixth Street, afterwards used for the Schuylkill Bank.

In summer the Bingham's transferred their society to their country seat across the Schuylkill, called Lansdowne; I presume in honour of the English Marquis whose intimacy they enjoyed, and for whom Mr Bingham had ordered of Gilbert Stuart, the well known portrait (full length) of Washington, he painted.

This noble seat, Lansdowne, was built by John Penn, son of Richard, the last Governor of Pennsylvania before the Revolution, and was I believe sold by his widow to Mr Bingham. During the great summer heats they resorted to Black Point on Shrewsbury River, ten or twelve miles from Long Branch, where Mr Bingham had another delightful house commanding a beautiful water view, & with every opportunity of sea-bathing.

This was filled with friends each season, and was near enough to Long Branch, the fashion of which place dates from that period, to attract by its hospitalities a constant variety of pleasant company.

My Uncle & Aunt who were their frequent guests at these different places, have often described to me the brilliant scenes at all of them. The Binghams had brought from Europe everything for the house & table which the taste & luxury of the times had invented. China & silver of course, but they first introduced silver pronged forks; for the older silver forks were only silver handled with steel

## Recollections

prongs; the silver handled knives which paired with them having round blunt ends, which might be put in the mouth.

Mr Bingham had imported also his household servants; his French cook and confectioner, his butler and house-keeper—who afterwards married, & being provided for by their old Master, established themselves in business, and were the parents of the Messrs Kirkham, respectable merchants. His coachman, Brown, became a wealthy thriving grocer.

I can well fancy, all the localities being well known to me, what a brilliant scene must have been presented at this noble residence on Third Street, where so many were assembled, worthy of all honour, whose polished manners had been formed in the most splendid Court of Europe; Mrs Bingham presiding surrounded by her beautiful sisters, for their portraits prove them all endowed with much more than ordinary charms of person, & I knew them all to be possessed of excellent manners.

Mrs Bingham's portrait in my possession is a *chef-d'œuvre* of Stuart, and exhibits great intelligence and sprightliness. She was not regularly beautiful, but had a combination of expression, grace, and figure, which made her the most attractive woman of her day.

She was not witty, but bright, always at her ease, and extremely kind and courteous to all. There were then fashions prevalent in England, which she had adopted, and had better not have imitated, from the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, & other leaders of the *Ton*; too much freedom of speech, and an interlarding of Oaths, a most detestable custom adopted by Mrs Bingham & her sisters, but not by my Aunt Harrison, who was disgusted by it. She and my Uncle were too elegant a couple ever to be

## Family Friends

omitted when the most distinguished guests were entertained, & my Uncle's fluency in French was an additional attraction.

I believe the French dinners and new customs were not a little embarrassing to untravelled Americans, unaccustomed to the silver forks and choice new dishes.

Mrs Morris prided herself on her housekeeping, and many preferred her turtle soup, venison, etc., to the disguised delicacies at Mrs Bingham's.

Mr Morris was a jovial coarse man, and perhaps the after-dinner conversations there, which degenerated into indelicacy, may have been introduced, as it is said was the case at Sir Robert Walpole's, to prevent political discussions becoming angry, after the guests were heated with wine, or to keep clear of topics which ought not to be discussed at an official table, for fear of incautious betrayal of secrets, and false reports of conversation. It is probable that when General Washington was his guest, which it appears from the letters of the former was very often, the company was select, and the talk more restrained.

I have never heard much of dinners at the President's, altho' my old friends spoke of being honoured occasionally by an invitation but they were probably formal & brief.

I have a dinner-plate of fine French China, with a narrow gilt edge, but no cipher or other ornament, which was part of the table service while Washington was President, & given to my Mother for me by Mrs Eleanor Custis Lewis.

The receptions at the President's were weekly. In the morning, a levee, when he received formally in the lower rooms, attended by his private secretaries, and sometimes by the members of his Cabinet. No persons were seated, nor were there any chairs in the room. After a formal pres-

## Recollections

entation and salutation and some brief words of compliment or enquiry, the President made his bow, & all retired.

In the evening, once a week, Mrs Washington received in her Drawing-rooms. None came but those on the visiting list, or whose presentations were asked for, & accorded.

The private Secretaries, Major Jackson and Major Lear, acted as Chamberlains, & handed each lady to Mrs Washington, who with her Granddaughter, and some intimate friends were prepared for the reception.

General Washington was always present unless prevented by public business. There was as little form and stiffness as possible, and it was a most agreeable and honourable privilege.

The ladies and gentlemen who were on terms of friendship, made it a point to go frequently, usually on their way to some gayer party, for the Drawing-rooms were closed at an early hour, and only sometimes when the older company had gone, the Granddaughters would ask the President's permission to dance, which was of course accorded.

My friend Mrs Gibson, who was very intimate with Nelly Custis and often at the President's, says he has danced with her, and the other children, seemingly with great enjoyment; but both she and my Uncle and Aunt Harrison have said expressly that they never heard of his dancing at any public or private Ball, while filling the dignified Office at the head of the State, altho' the honour of being his partner in a Minuet or Country Dance has been claimed for some of the ladies of that time by their descendants, and so recorded in the not very accurate account of the Court of Washington, written by Mr Griswold.

I may mention that Mrs Eleanor Custis Lewis sent to my Mother with the dinner plate above mentioned,

## Family Friends

needle-book of brocade made of a dress of her Grandmother's, and a pincushion of white silver brocade, made of part of her Wedding dress.

There are few other relics from the personal effects of General and Mrs Washington now left in Philadelphia.

His gold watch left by him to Judge Washington was given by the latter to his namesake Bushrod Washington Adams, and the French Escritoire which was in his official place of business, in the basement of his residence was a large and handsome piece of furniture, bought by my Aunt Powel at the sale of part of the furniture of the President's residence, was given by her to her nephew, Charles Willing Hare, and has since been in the possession of his descendants.

The Carriage which was supposed to be General Washington's, and which my great-aunt Powel used, was certainly not his, but one built for her, in which I have often ridden to St Peter's Church with my great-aunt, Mrs Powel, and my mother, her namesake.

It was a monstrous affair, cream-coloured, with box and hammer-cloth. Old Robert Green, the grey-haired Coachman, in old fashioned livery, and Footman behind went in great state to the family pew. I believe the carriage is still in existence at . . . Coach Repository and is shewn as General Washington's.

Its trappings and gilding are gone, and its rich linings also, but Tradition may preserve it a little longer, as the last family Coach of old times. My aunt Powel had bought General Washington's carriage horses, but they were dead long before my time.

In the days I have been writing about, Mrs Powel kept a most hospitable house in Third Street. She too laid claim

## Recollections

to very superior household management, and was ridiculously jealous of her contemporary Mrs Robert Morris on this score. She, moreover, laid herself out for conversation, made an art of it, read Pope and Young, to store her mind with apt Quotations, and generally made a great impression on Strangers.

Her manners were indeed excellent, both courteous and dignified and her conversation was animated and lively enough when not dressed out for company; her social jealousies, and her political and other prejudices made her very spicy at times, and she had stores of local and family anecdotes to explode the vulgar pretensions of new-made people.

On her fiftieth birthday, she gave a Ball, which had a good deal of *éclat*. It was opened by herself in a Minuet with Barbé-Marbois the French Minister, both dressed, if I remember right, in blue satin trimmed with squirrel skins, to match. The family tradition was, at one time, that her partner was General Washington, but this was not so. My Aunt Harrison, who was at the Ball, remembered with precision about it.

The fact is, that she did not captivate the interest of our great Chief, and she boiled over with jealousy when she saw him walk past her house of an afternoon, when official duties were over, not to stop at the house of her lovely niece, Mrs Bingham, but to enjoy the lively conversation of Mrs General Stewart, who then lived in the house next to the corner of Union Street.

Mrs Stewart was, it is said, a prime favourite of his, and her family have gallant letters, and a miniature of himself presented to her. Mrs Stewart was daughter of Blair Mc-Clanaghan, an Irish or Scotch man, a coarse and vulgar

## Family Friends

man of low extraction; but his daughter was pretty and witty, and exceedingly amusing. I recollect her as an old lady, when she was very intimate at my Aunt Harrison's house, and constantly invited to their dinners to meet and entertain strangers. It is my impression she had been in France, but this I do not know. (*Note.* She went there with General Stewart after our Revolution, and acquired with the language, the political opinions then prevalent, so soon to degenerate into revolutionary madness.)

At all events she was a great admirer of the French, even of Napoleon, and a great Democrat, and my Aunt Powel hated her. The General was amused by her piquancy, and not offended by her politics. His attentions did not give rise to the least scandal.

Her daughter, Mrs Phil Church, recently dead, was, I suppose, something like her mother; a woman of charming manners, & I believe most amiable.

General Stewart left his wife in great poverty, and her sons were not fortunate in a hard struggle with adversity. My Uncle, with his characteristic kindness and delicacy, helped his old friend & her daughter, Miss Mary Ann Stewart, & by his exertions in managing some little relics of property, and securing something from the assets of a Brother who died involved, in South America, kept them above penury, & at last genteel competence.

Miss Stewart was a most excellent sensible religious woman, probably very unlike her mother or her sister. It is astonishing what trouble my Uncle took in her behalf. I have, or had, half a drawer-full of letters on their business, which required influence at Washington & with foreign Governments to carry through.

## Recollections

My Aunt Powel's house in Third Street opened on a garden, which was bounded South by the grounds of the Bingham Mansion. It was built by her husband, Mr Samuel Powel, who died of yellow fever in 1793. His wife was somewhat advanced when she married him, & it was said Love had not much part in the affair, on her side at least. She had had her disappointments, having set her cap at John Dickinson, for whom it was evident to those who heard her speak of him in her old age, she must have been much attached, & she had another rather serious flirtation in Virginia, if I remember right, with Richard Henry Lee. (*Note.* From a letter of her sister, Mrs Byrd, I find she refused one of the most brilliant matches in Virginia, a Mr Beverly, reputed worth 80,000 pounds sterling!)

Mr Powel was certainly in no respect comparable to either of these but he was a man of very handsome fortune for those days, had the best education our city could then afford, had travelled over a considerable portion of the continent, even to Italy, from which he brought copies of pictures, marbles, etc., etc.

He was indeed considered in our city, a patron of Art. His own kit-cat portrait by Angelica Kauffman, is in possession of Samuel Powel, the great-nephew of his wife, & also a portrait of General Washington by Pine, one of the honest originals of that great man — with a mean head and protruding paunch, particularly conspicuous in his buff & blue regimentals.

Mr Powel was rather a conceited priggish man, & precise & peremptory as a husband. When he died it was perhaps a great relief to his wife, who wrote a monumental epitaph that would fill a folio page and never wearied herself with praising him. Perhaps she felt she had neglected

## Family Friends

her duties in his last illness, leaving him to die alone in an out-house at Powelton, where there was no danger of infection; though perhaps she did not know it, for she was panic-stricken at the very idea of epidemic disease, (as she was at the sight of a mouse) and she seemed to have transmitted the same fearfulness to her nephew and great-nephew, with her husband's fortune. Mr Powel had held a good many honourable places in civil life. He had been Mayor of the City, Speaker of the State-Senate, and first President of the Agricultural Society. He was no doubt a good and useful man, but very far from a Statesman or man of Science.

Her importance as his widow in Society was not the less. Alarmed by the yellow fever she took or built a house far out of the built portion of the City, on the north side of Market Street below Twelfth, and induced my grandfather Francis to take an adjoining house where he lived till his death, when my grandmother moved to Chestnut Street, next east of her daughter, Mrs Harrison's house, and my Aunt Powel built the excellent and most convenient mansion opposite my aunt's; the scene of much hospitality till her death in 1829.

Next to my Aunt Powel's house in Third Street to the north, was Chief Justice Chew's. It had been built by or for, Colonel Byrd of Westover, Virginia, who married my great-aunt, Mary Willing, but was occupied by them for a very brief period, preceding his ruin or death.

Chief Justice Chew died on January 20, 1810.

His first wife was a Galloway of Maryland; by her he had three daughters; one married to General Eager Howard of the Revolutionary Army, another to Edward Tilghman the Lawyer, the third to Alexander Wilcocks. His sec-

## Recollections

ond wife was a Miss Oswald, a woman of considerable fortune, and greater expectations from her uncle Joseph. Her daughters were, at the time I write about, rather conspicuous members of society.

Sophia, married to Henry Phillips, an Englishman, and Mrs Carroll, the Wife of Charles Carroll Junr. of Carrollton, remarkable for their beauty. Juliana, married to Philip Nicklin more noted for her wit, or rather broad humour. Mrs Phillips, who was the same age with my Aunt Harrison and was called after her, (for her mother, hearing of the name my grandfather had given his child, resolved to take it for hers,) was through life one of her dearest friends. She had been a beauty and was an exceedingly agreeable person when I knew her in old age, very intelligent, and only a little too much given to flattery, after the manner of her family. She made an unhappy marriage for her husband died early, but she was not left in poverty. Her only child, Elizabeth, was one of the sweetest and most charming persons I ever knew; a prodigious belle in her day; afterwards poorly married to T. C. Montgomery, who was a coxcomb and ran through her money. Her life was not happy and her end miserable.

Harriet Chew, her sister, married Charles Carroll, son of the last . . . Signer—a brute and a drunkard; she was, as long as I knew her, separated from her husband. She had the remains of great beauty. She lived to extreme old age, and must be recollected by many, the last of her sisterhood; three had been clever.

I would remark that the progeny of Carrollton did not keep up the credit of the name. He (Charles Carroll of Carrollton) was a very polished and highly educated gentleman—all that the Jesuits of St Omers could make an

## Family Friends

apt scholar, and his life, I believe, was eminently respectable. When he was sent to Europe for his education, his parents were not married, although they were cousins. When the son on his majority, found this out, he refused to return to America till his father had repaired this injustice to his mother, and which by canon-law, legitimized himself. Whether it would have saved his inheritance was not tested, I believe. His father, who had been Surveyor General of Maryland, and had picked out all the finest parcels of land to be surveyed to himself, was still alive at the Revolution, and the great landed Estate was safe in any contingency, as the old gentleman had not forfeited his allegiance, while the young one risked nothing by his signature. The value of the Estate was greatly exaggerated too. It was most of it wild land, though of the greatest prospective value, which it subsequently acquired by settlements. If it had all been in danger, it would by no means have been the largest property put in peril—not to be compared with Arthur Middleton's for instance, which was at one time all in the possession of the British and thoroughly devastated; though the ancestral houses were not burnt, and the ancestral Tomb not violated, till our own countrymen visited upon the conquered South the full measure of northern hate and vengeance.

Juliana, Mrs Nicklin, could not I think have ever been handsome but she was free from affectation, full of fun, and careless of what she said. Some of her funny sayings and doings in old age recur to me.

One night going home alone from her daughter's house, she received a most affectionate embrace! Not at all frightened, she cried out, "Take me to a lamp, you blackguard!" He did, and her wrinkles protected her. One evening,

## Recollections

tired by an interminable piece of music, she went into the entry and cried, “Fire,” which at once brought the sonata, or ballad, to a close.

When a young woman, and dancing with my Uncle Harrison, she called his attention to Mr Lyle (the father of Mrs Kuhn,) who was sweeping past them in a country dance, with his body at an angle of 45°. “Take care,” said she, “or we shall be bombarded!” Upon hearing which, Mr John Brown Cutting turned it into the following epigram, which he pushed under my Uncle’s door at night, from which I infer it was when he was still a bachelor; else at Long Branch or some watering place.

*With George Gallant danced Charming Chew,  
With wit and mirth exuberant,  
When Lyle’s chief end brushed nigh in view,  
Prodigiously protuberant!  
Quoth Juliana, with a smile,  
Arch-innocent, unguarded,  
Beware the citadel of Lyle,  
Or we shall be bombarded! ”*

(*Note.* This is very poor stuff, but it was thought good enough to be preserved.)

This Cutting was a gentleman of the world much in repute in those days as a wit. I presume he was of the New York Cuttings, but cannot say. To him is attributed the most wonderful pun on record.

Listening to an account of the old and barbarous custom of Keel-hauling, as narrated by a naval Officer, he observed, “Well Sir, I should call that, undergoing a great hard ship!”

I presume this is unequaled. I think it was he who called William Temple Franklin, “a double-distilled bastard.”

## Family Friends

I regret being unable to tell anything more about this gentleman's career in Philadelphia. I have heard my father-in-law, Governor Middleton, speak of him. He knew him in London. Cutting was then on terms of intimacy with a sister of the notorious [blank] afterwards Lady Berkeley, his own mistress having obtained unenviable notoriety in the Berkeley peerage case. At that time, wishing to relieve himself of her support, he introduced her to a rich Carolinian, Heyward, a man of very feeble intellect, and contrived or promoted a marriage between them, which in spite of all Mr Middleton could do or say, and in spite of all the interference of General T. Pinckney, the American Minister, actually took place, and Heyward brought his bride to America, to the dismay of his family. His Estate was settled upon him, and his wife's conduct was decorous. She made however vain attempts to be received in Society, but after some years, Mr Heyward dying without children, she married Mr Charles Baring, the cousin of Alexander Baring, and subsequently established herself at Buncombe, North Carolina, where she built and planted a magnificent country-seat, endowed a church, and was bountiful of good works. At last she conquered the repugnance of her neighbours, and those who formerly shunned her, accepted her hospitalities. At last, at a great age, (about 80) she died, leaving a considerable fortune out of her savings, and the Buncombe property to her husband, by whom she had no children. He, at the age of 80, did marry again, and has left several by his second wife. It is said he was induced to marry Mrs Heyward on condition of relief from some pecuniary embarrassments, which growing out of gambling, would have disgraced him with his relations in England, of whom he was the commercial representative

## Recollections

in America. He bore a good character ever after, and lived and died respected in South Carolina. The Heyward Estate reverted to the family from which it came.

*Revenons à nos moutons*—the row of aristocratic residences on Third Street. I well recollect the Chew House. It was a very large & spacious one. The entrance hall and parlours, panelled with most elaborate sculptures in wood, and the panels, I recollect, filled with very black pictures, whether imported or native I never heard.

Next, to the north, was the Willing Mansion, built by my great-grandfather, Charles Willing, & then inhabited by his son, a stately gentleman, who filled many civic offices with great dignity, and died in 1820, one of our richest men.

I do not believe it was the scene of much hospitality. His wife died young, and his eldest daughter, Mrs Bingham, made her house the daily resort of her single sisters, who did not long remain single.

At the northwest corner of Third Street, lived Andrew Hamilton, the third of that name, younger brother of William Hamilton of the Woodlands himself in very straitened means.

He was a man distinguished for his knowledge of horses, & never so happy as with the reins of four-in-hand. He had married a Miss Franks, of Jewish descent, & by her had a large family; among them one who was a great beauty in those days. She married Mr Lyle, an Irish Merchant adventurer, and was the mother of Mrs Becket, & Mrs Hartman Kuhn.

Andrew Hamilton & his wife died I presume, about the time of their daughter's marriage, and Mr Lyle soon

## Family Friends

afterwards lost his beautiful wife, who left him with two very lovely little daughters.

He bought a house soon afterwards on Seventh Street, the corner of Carpenter (now Jayne) Street. It was a shabby old affair, but had a fine lot reaching to Chestnut Street, & occupying all the space in the square west of my Aunt Powel's Chestnut Street Mansion.

Here Miss Mary Hamilton presided, and brought up her nieces with great tenderness. Here, too, lived James & Andrew Hamilton, the bachelor brothers, and here, Peggy and Becky, the other sisters.

Becky married Captain O'Beirne, of the English Army, son of an Irish Bishop, & had a miserable & disgraceful career. She had been previously engaged to John Hare Powel, who broke it off, with a good deal of cruelty, as his nature prompted, and to the no small delight of his Aunt, who had already adopted him. The Lyle-Hamilton house was the scene of great gayety, even to my recollections. The Lyle girls as they grew up were greatly admired; they danced and dressed well, & were thought beauties, though far behind their mother, judging from her picture. Ellen was thought clever, too. She was bright, but rather noisy, very like her daughter, Mrs Evans, & unfortunately like her father. Among her numerous admirers was General Scott, but in the end she made the very best choice that ever was offered to her, in accepting that sensible & honourable man Hartman Kuhn, who made her a most excellent husband. The great estate of her father, amounting to \$800,000, at his death was divided between his two legitimate daughters. Two bastards, to whom he gave the same names, Ellen & Mary, were left to the mercy of his legal heirs, & were provided for by Mr Kuhn & Mr Becket

## Recollections

respectably. This fortune was in Trust, and with the accession of the share of the Hamilton Estate, has made the numerous descendants rich.

The Lyle-Hamilton house was the resort of a very gay set, amongst them, actors and musicians—among the former, Harwood, Cooper, Incledon, etc.; and many a gay supper was enlivened by glees and ballads.

Dominic Lynch was intimate there, who used to delight me, when a boy, with Tom Moore's melodies, & Moore himself, when in Philadelphia, was, I am told, a frequent guest.

Good old Miss Molly Hamilton was an admirable manager, & a most obliging & accommodating chaperon, and the hospitalities of the house were maintained in spite of accumulating debts, which Lyle arranged much to his subsequent advantage by compound interest on Post Obits.

William Hamilton of the Woodlands, the tenant entail, could not live forever. His own indebtedness to his nephews & nieces was large; James was the next heir & he and Andrew were both bachelors.

The Hamilton family of Bush Hill & the Woodlands has now become extinct, in the male line.

Their large fortune is distributed in many channels, viz: The Palaires, who are grandchildren of Andrew Hamilton, (whom I have just named) by his only daughter, married to Captain Palairet of the English Army; the children of poor Becky O'Beirne; the only son of Mary Lyle, who married Henry Becket; and the children of Ellen, wife of Hartman Kuhn.

The founder was Andrew Hamilton, a Scotchman of great ability and acquirements, by far the first lawyer known in the middle colonies, before the Revolution.

## Family Friends

He came to this country towards the end of the 17th century, under a feigned name (Trent).

He was certainly a gentleman & a well-educated man, but had either been involved in some of the political difficulties of the time of William III or, as was reported, had committed some act of violence, (the family said Homicide in a duel) which did not bring disgrace or the pains of felony. This is quite evident from his subsequently entering himself as a member of Gray's Inn, and being called to the English Bar in 1712. He established himself originally in Maryland, & practised law in Kent County, where he married a lady of fortune & good family, a Mrs Preeson, widow of Joseph Preeson and daughter of Thomas Brown of Accomac, Virginia.

He was first employed in the service of William Penn, in a suit against a gentleman of the lower counties named Berkely Codd, Esqr., who disputed some of the Proprietor's rights.

I may mention that he was engaged by Thomas Fisher, my great great grandfather, was Proprietary Agent under James Logan, the General Representative of William Penn, & that Berkely Codd's only daughter was the wife of William Till, whose only child & daughter married Andrew Hamilton 2nd son of Andrew, & through her the fine estate of the Woodlands came to William Hamilton, whose social position I am now about to describe.

My first visit to the Woodlands was during his lifetime. I was taken by my good old friend, his niece. I found the old gentleman in a sad state of helplessness from gout. He was wheeled about the grounds in a large garden chair, & was seated at his table propped by cushions, and fed by his servant. He had been a bon-vivant, after the fashion

## Recollections

of the day, and kept a very hospitable house; but it is likely enough his gouty infirmities were part of his inheritance, for I never heard he indulged in excessive potations.

His elegant pursuits, & active out-door occupations, better filled his time. The Woodlands, as he left it, was the most beautiful country-seat in America. I have said before, he inherited it from his Grandfather Till, a person of some consequence in his day; holding appointments under the British Crown.

Where he learnt the rudiments of Art, in painting, Architecture, & Horticulture, I do not know. I think he was in England, perhaps he accompanied his Uncle, the Governor, in his boyhood. But I have heard Bishop White who was his schoolmate, tell me he remembered sitting with him at the door or portico of the old place, when a boy, & listening to his plans for its improvement. How far it was the result of the skilful opening of vistas, or planting forest trees, I, who only saw it in perfection, can not say, but my first impressions of landscape gardening, were taken from what I saw there.

The city out-skirts have encroached everywhere now. Ugly buildings rise where meadows and groves bounded the quiet river. The trees around the margin, which shaded the romantic walks I enjoyed so much as a boy, have been cut down for wharves and a railway. The fine woods of Gray's Gardens, the more distant plantations of the Bartrams, the picturesque projecting rocks in the foreground, over all which we used to look while we traced the meanders of the tranquil Schuylkill on its way to the Delaware, all are gone! and the primitive floating bridge has given place to the great tasteless wooden viaduct of the Baltimore

## Family Friends

Railroad, which spoils the landscape and obstructs the view.

Often, of a summer's afternoon, have I sat on the portico of the mansion house, as built by William Hamilton, watching a rare sail on the river, or the process of drawing the seine, or numbering the carriages passing to the Gardens of Gray's Ferry, near enough to mark them and all known as of our acquaintances; for in those days, these gardens were a fashionable resort, and our local aristocracy had retained sufficient prestige to keep them to itself.

I have been there when elegant people were walking about, or taking tea or refreshments, while their carriages and liveried servants were drawn up outside, and the *profanum vulgus* did not think of intruding.

The Entrance to the Woodlands, through its Lodges was fine, and well laid out. All the walks were well disposed, seats and arbours scattered where they might be wanted, to repose, or a lovely vista, through the park or over the waters, was worthy to dwell on.

Statues, busts and urns were placed about, but not too obtrusively.

I remember a little monument to Shenstone, and I think there were memorials of others, who gave practical examples of their taste in gardening, or stimulated it by their poetry.

A moss-covered fountain, a pond for goldfish in a sequestered nook, come back to my memory.

All these have now given place to graves and tasteless monuments.

The shrubbery was varied and extensive; all that was most beautiful among our native plants, or could be acclimated from Europe, or the South, gave shade and perfume everywhere.

## Recollections

Imported trees, such as the travelled botanists of the neighbourhood, the Bartrams, could furnish, or were suggested by Michaux, who was employed by Mr Hamilton, were the pride of his heart.

His flower gardens, and green and hothouses too, contained everything that he could collect, and for a long time had precedence over everything of this sort in our country. By degrees, all that required most care, perished. His successors had little of his knowledge or taste, and not much money to spare. Thus, I only knew the place in its decay, when it was still beautiful enough to captivate me, and create a passion for gardening which has lasted through my life, and, in a certain degree, been gratified by the much inferior Place I have formed for myself.

The house itself, still, I believe standing, was a very fine one for company. A large and lofty hall, with arched alcoves at the ends, through which you passed into two small square cabinets filled with pictures, opened into the southern portico through three large arched doors.

In this were some busts and bronzes, and some Louis Quatorze furniture. Its ceilings should have been frescoed, and it seemed to await completion, but it was a noble room for dancing, and delightfully cool in summer. From it you looked south upon the river and the low-lands. The small cabinets to the east and west, were almost entirely covered with pictures to the ceilings, a large part of them of the Dutch and Flemish Schools.

If the Gerard Dows and the Van Ostades were original, they were of great value.

I think there were certainly two Vandycks; a portrait of Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I, and a lovely Holy Family.

## Family Friends

There was nothing which pretended to come from the great Masters of Italy, and only one Spanish picture, the Ecstasy of St Ignatius, or some other black-robed Saint, said to be a Murillo, captured before the Revolution on its way to South America, and purchased by Governor Hamilton. There were cabinets of curiosities, mosaics, etc., and I recollect two beautiful mirrors of Venetian glass, with cut and engraved frames of glass, in the finest possible taste, which my visits to Europe taught me to appreciate.

The North Front was extended by two long oval rooms, a drawing-room and dining-room, the latter filled with family portraits. One full-length, of Governor Hamilton, by West, William Hamilton and his beautiful niece by Stewart, and portraits of more remote ancestors, including the great lawyer, by Westmüller, copied by that finished artist from the coarse & crude attempts of the wretched limners who followed their unremunerated trade in America at the beginning of the last century. Upstairs there was a Venus or Danae, by Westmüller, always kept under a curtain, and shown with caution or seen by stealth.

The drawing-room furniture was said to be from Versailles, and I daresay there were many things worthy of note which have escaped my memory. But we had nothing like it near Philadelphia, and it all impressed my youthful imagination.

It seemed a very Strawberry Hill, and I fancied William Hamilton must be something like Horace Walpole! He had many of his tastes, certainly, but I presume none of his wit, for I never heard it hinted at.

He kept a hospitable home, entertained gentlemen frequently, and ladies occasionally.

He drove showy equipages, and his chariot or barouche

## Recollections

with postillions made quite a dash through the streets of Philadelphia.

His house had no room appropriated for books, & I supposed there was no library, but when it was sold & about to be dismantled, certain triangular closets, & others with shelves, which had been entirely covered with pictures, were opened, which appeared to be filled with a pretty large collection. Some of them were rare and valuable, collected by Governor Hamilton, and some which had been bought by his Father, the Attorney-General. It is possible the rest of the collection may have remained at Bush Hill and were burnt when the old family mansion was destroyed more than fifty years ago.

Of the books which remained, Miss Hamilton gave me some very rare and valuable ones, especially the noble collection of engraved heads by Houbraken, a fine illuminated missal on vellum, and others.

I rescued at that time from destruction many curious Historical Documents; William Penn's original instructions for settling Pennsylvania, the Hamilton Correspondence, or at least the letters of the Penns in England to the Governor, and many other things; and had I known better what to look for, might have secured still more.

But the establishment was broken up when I was a boy of 18 or 19 years old, and neither I nor the good Miss Hamilton knew what was there, nor the value of it.

The pictures she removed to her house in town, and they afterwards went by her Will to her great-nephew, Hamilton Becket; some of the furniture was sold, many curiosities were given away, and all is now scattered!

Could the whole estate have been retained, its value now would be enormous! It extended on the Schuylkill from

## Family Friends

the Market Street Bridge to Maryland Creek, which falls into the river a little above Gray's Ferry, and reached westward more than a mile, embracing the whole of what used to be called Hamilton Village. This latter portion was divided off by William Hamilton, who had no ready money, & could not sell the entailed portion of the Estate, & when his nephews & nieces came to divide the property, they found the necessity of parting with the whole of it. The Bush Hill Estate, which was originally part of the Manor of Springettsbury, was conveyed to the great lawyer for legal services, & the large brick house, which I fancy still stands in a form hardly to be recognized, was built by him. This property was bounded by Vine Street on the South, Coates Street on the north, and east and west, by 13th and 19th Streets.

Here Governor Hamilton resided for many years in considerable style and hospitality. During the Revolutionary War the fine groves and ornamental trees were cut down by either army, but the place was still kept up, and I think, occasionally occupied by William Hamilton in winter.

During a part of General Washington's presidency, he rented it to John Adams, the Vice-President, & I have heard my Uncle describe a dinner there, when the vice-president, after receiving his guests with great courtesy, informed them that he had received the President's invitation to dine that day, after he had engaged their company, that he felt he must obey the commands of the Head of the State, & leave them to Mrs Adams to preside over the hospitalities of his table!

Whether this was the etiquette then established, and whether it was continued in Washington, I cannot tell,

## Recollections

but it produced a sufficient impression on my Uncle to be remembered.

Bush Hill house was burnt accidentally some fifty or sixty years ago, & in it perished, I fancy, much that would now be considered valuable; books, MSS. and perhaps furniture.

The Estate long remained an open common, but is now covered with fine houses & brings great revenues I suppose to the family.

After William Hamilton's death, the entail was broken by agreement between the two next heirs, his nephews James and Andrew: James, the eldest, taking two thirds. James, however, died in 1819, without issue and without a Will. His three sisters and the children of Mrs Lyle shared his estate equally with Andrew, who subsequently married in England, had one daughter, and died soon after.

Shortly after my Uncle established himself in Chestnut Street the troubles of the great Financier of the Revolution began, & grasping round, as all mighty speculators do, to save himself, he involved all his friends, & almost all our business community, my Uncle among the number; for who had not then confidence in the integrity and great resources of Robert Morris?

His place, on the lot between Walnut and Chestnut Streets, &, excepting a strip of 50 feet on the east side which no price could tempt Mr George Fox to sell, embracing the whole square from Seventh to Eighth, was begun in 1795, when, as afterwards appeared, his Estate was hopelessly insolvent.

The house was in the style of a French Château, or

## Family Friends

rather private Hôtel of the largest class, in architecture resembling that now coming into vogue, especially in New England, with Mansard roof and clustered chimnies. It had, however, only two stories below the roof. Its material was of the finest brick with marble facings; window-frames, porticos, all imported from Italy, and sculptured bas-reliefs inserted in marble panels. A poor engraving is extant, representing the building unfinished, under a temporary roof, before it was pulled down, and fragments of the sculpture were in various stone-yards till within a few years.

Two of the bas-reliefs referred to were inserted in the Chestnut Street Theatre above Sixth Street, several marble capitals I remember in the Herkness marble-yard, & perhaps the marble door-frames & columns on the house on Tenth Street, N. E. corner of Market, which was old Mr Herkness's, came from the same source, as also certain capitals placed on gate-posts in what was called Islington Lane, the entrance to a Cemetery. The mechanics who were not paid for their work divided the materials for their partial indemnity, & the blocks of houses on Chestnut, Walnut, Sansom & Locust Streets, erected on speculation by the associated mechanics aided by funds from William Sansom & others, in the end exhausted all the stone, brick & timber that could be used.

I am told that even lately, when a block of marble was removed from the front of one of these houses, fragments of a sculptured frieze turned inside, indicated the source from which it came.

The architect was a Major L'Enfant, a French Officer, I believe, skilled in the art of seductive estimates!

## Recollections

It is said he undertook to build the edifice for \$60,000. But this was soon exhausted & nobody was paid.

Perhaps it was Major L'Enfant who assured his employers that a house would not cost at "the outside" more than a certain sum (say \$60,000) & when the roof was raised & all the money already spent before the interior was even begun, answered to the reproachful enquiry as to the fulfilment of his engagement "Ah! on the outside!! Yes, I promised it, and is not the *outside* finished?"

A foreigner might readily be pardoned for a confusion of prepositions which are often synonymous.

Major L'Enfant was also employed to build the Hall for the City Dancing Assembly. A sum was raised which was estimated sufficient, but it was all used up before the building had risen many feet above the surface of the ground, kitchens, wine-vaults, & ice-house, being all there was to show; the undertaking was abandoned and never renewed.

The lot in Fifth Street was next south of St Thomas African Church, & was for a long time covered by a shell of a building, perhaps the superstructure to Major L'Enfant's cellars.

A lofty edifice just raised, now replaces it.

My Uncle, as Treasurer of the Fund, nursed a small balance for many years when it was divided among the surviving subscribers & their heirs; the Fund being in some way placed in a building erected by Robert Kidd on the site of the old Washington Hall, with conditions favourable to its use by the City Dancing Assembly of future times.

We had several series of Balls there previous to 1830, the most remarkable one of which was the great Fancy Ball of 1828; but since that time fashion has deserted those precincts & the long suspension of our Assemblies,

## Family Friends

has probably forfeited all right to the use of the Ball Room.

The establishment of the National Capital on the banks of the Potomac, the founding of a great city, & the unlimited scope for architectural talent of course attracted Major L'Enfant to this field of glory and profit, & he was perhaps the first on the great list of architects and contractors, who have buried so much of the Nation's wealth, under buildings, many of which are the nation's disgrace.

Magnificent plans, incredible estimates, bottomless foundations, abortive performances! Roofs too heavy, and walls too light, legislative theatres where nobody can be heard, Court rooms where nobody can see, libraries constructed the best plan to invite conflagration, & exteriors of marble which must be painted to conceal defects; all this was the work of many (rogues?) & accomplished men, aided by Congressional Committees.

The latter, at least were honest in Major L'Enfant's days, but for his fame, if he had the credit of laying out what the Abbé Corréa called the "City of magnificent Distances," his name will not be associated with anything so monstrously tasteless & incongruous as the Smithsonian Institute and the Washington Monument; the latter, I presume, happily destined like the Cologne Cathedral, to carry on its summit for centuries, a gigantic crane, stretching its decaying arm for new blocks, no longer to be offered by or to a Nation whose typical hero is no longer Washington but Abraham Lincoln!

But to return to Robert Morris. His bankruptcy was like a little earthquake; everybody trembled and feared their

## Recollections

roofs would fall about their heads. The catastrophe was like this to some who were soon houseless; old men and women who could ill afford to lose anything, had trusted everything to his keeping. Our good Bishop, whose means had been ample for every refined want and every claim of benevolence, put down his carriage, sold his country-seat, and regulated his economies to his straitened means. Many proud men, many humbler dependants, were reduced to daily work for daily bread. And those who had notes and bonds were no better off, for these were no more than the little empty bubbles, thrown up & vanishing in the great explosion. My Uncle trusted everything of his own to his friend and patron, and lost all, except the house which had been bought four years before in his wife's name, and I believe with her marriage portion. Life's work was to be begun again by him, but he had good friends, & an incomparable helpmate, and he set to work with a will which almost ensured success.

Much reproach has been cast on our community for suffering Robert Morris to lie for four years or more in the County Jail. A man to whom the Nation owed so much! But the almost universal distress his failure caused, and the special grief of every family whose faith had been abused and whose livelihood absorbed in this monstrous scheme for private wealth, shut many a heart to pity.

Robert Morris long avoided arrest by burying himself at his country place, The Hills, where he admitted some friends and did not live like an anchorite. The Sheriff's Officer, finding peaceful ingress impossible, contrived a trap for him. He either personated or accompanied a fisherman to the door with a marvellously fine sheepshead. As the price was disputed & the fish being taken away, the epi-

## Family Friends

cure could not resist the temptation. He showed himself at the door or the window, and the hand of the Law was upon him! How he enjoyed his fish, and how it was cooked, tradition does not tell us.

My Grandfather Francis had been Morris's friend; they had been fellow officers in our first Bank chartered by Congress. They were long united by congenial intercourse, for Mr Morris was not only very hospitable, but it was said, an extremely agreeable companion.

My Grandfather went to see him at The Hills and was admitted. He urged on him a full disclosure of his affairs, & entire relinquishment of everything to his clamorous creditors. His arguments & entreaties were of no effect, and he left him in disgust and never saw him again.

I may mention that Morris had purchased The Hills from my Grandfather in 1794, four years before, about 19 acres of land for 375 pounds Pennsylvania currency.

This was part of the great Vineyard Estate; old plans designating the site of Mr Morris's house as "old Vineyard Hill," where William Penn planted a vineyard and made wine.

After Mr Morris's failure, Mr Pratt became the owner, and called it Lemon Hill. The fine trees and well-kept flower gardens made it a very attractive spot in my boyhood. The finest trees were cut down by Isaac Lloyd, a speculating purchaser, before its acquisition by the city. It now forms an important part of Fairmount Park.

Morris took a characteristic vengeance after my Grandfather's death. He transferred a claim on his estate, which was proved to be fraudulent, to his old partner, Thomas Willing, in part settlement of his debt to him. Although Mr Willing never prosecuted this till my Grandmother's

## Recollections

death, it gave rise to a painful correspondence with her, and separated for the last years of their lives, brother and sister, who were supposed to be bound from childhood by an almost romantic attachment.

The decision of the Court fully justified the indignation with which my Grandmother first heard of this base transaction.

Mr Morris was a man of very loose morality. He was the illegitimate son of an English Merchant commanding his own vessel, accidentally killed by the wadding of a gun discharged in his honour in the Chesapeake. The deceased had business relations with Charles Willing, who took the son into his Counting-house as an apprentice, and gave him a home at his house, where my great grandmother treated him with maternal kindness which he seemed in her old age to have forgotten.

He had a mistress, I presume before marriage, by whom he had children whom he educated and provided for, but not under his own name. They were received at his house and they took the name of [blank] and I believe were quite respectable people.

I have seen his grandson, a very handsome man, who was Consul at Marseilles, and may be still alive.

His legitimate descendants, at least the males, were far less worthy.

His eldest son, Robert, committed forgery, and fled. Charles died a drunkard on the market shambles, Thomas was a defaulting marshal and established a very bad name in a law-suit with his brother-in-law, Mr Nixon,—a shame to both of them. Mr Nixon's sons all fell into bad habits, but their names had I think no other stigma of reproach.

Mrs Nixon was a proud and high-minded woman: her

## Family Friends

daughters, ornaments of society and eminent in religion and charity.

Another daughter of Robert Morris married a brother of Chief Justice Marshall.

The youngest son, Henry, struggled hard with adversity, and left no inheritance but his own honest name to worthy descendants, some now supporting themselves by keeping a select boarding-house.

How far qualities are transmitted from fathers to their descendants in their blood, is a matter of dispute. Their example is of more importance, perhaps. In this instance this was bad, not only in his business habits and reckless expenditure, but in his epicurean life and his coarse conversation, for it is traditional that his after-dinner talk was often very unfit for modest youth to hear; somewhat the fashion of the day, but none the less pernicious in its influence.

I should be sorry to publish what I have set down as coming from what I believe unquestionable authority.

Previous to the failure of Mr Morris, my Uncle had been a partner of Mr Samuel Sterrett of Baltimore, but at that time resident in Philadelphia.

His descendants are now among the most respectable citizens of the former city.

He, at one time, also, though I cannot tell at what period, entered into the same business relation with Mr Hottinguer, the founder of the Commercial and Banking House of that name in Paris.

It seems to have been a brief connection, but the friendship existing at that time between him and Mr Hottinguer continued through life.

## Recollections

Mrs Hottinguer was an American, a lady of the Redwood family of Newport, Rhode Island.

When the crisis came, my Uncle, though it seems he must have apprehended it, was much disheartened, & his health, not founded on a good constitution, suffered greatly; but his incomparable wife would not let his spirits sink into despondency, and his friends were numerous and influential. His mother was still alive, and able to make some pecuniary advances.

My Grandfather Francis, although his estate was very unproductive and he himself a sufferer from the failure of Mr Morris, had influence which he gladly exerted, for my Uncle, whose marriage he had so much opposed, had won his entire esteem.

Having strong friends in the administration of Mr. Adams it is probable (but of this I am not quite certain) he obtained for his son-in-law, the position of Navy Agent, which the latter certainly held from the creation of that Office, till the second administration of General Jackson.

Through all the changes of administration, till that time, no one thought of displacing him, or, if it were suggested, his *singular* exactness in this Office of Trust, and his great services to the Navy Department in time of our second war with Great Britain, secured his constant reappointment.

At the time when the Credit of the Government was at a low ebb and the Treasury almost empty, he procured at his own responsibility and risk, large funds which were necessary for the immediate efficiency of our gallant little Navy.

These services were ever kept in mind, and the last letter from Mr Amos Kendall, the second Auditor of the Treasury, on acknowledging the receipt of my Uncle's conclud-

## Family Friends

ing accounts, gave a just tribute to a rare exactness and fidelity, which in the long term of his official services had never been questioned.

My Uncle never changed his politics, which were Federalist of the Washington and Hamilton School.

He never failed to vote for the ticket of his preference, but he took no active part in opposition to the various administrations under which he held office, even when he entirely disapproved of their measures; never, however, concealing his spoken opinion. It was not, therefore, till the infamous party doctrine, "To the Victors belong the Spoils," was introduced under General Jackson, that his removal was thought of.

After the War at least, the emoluments of the Navy Agency were very small, and the trouble and responsibility had become somewhat irksome to my Uncle, who would have resigned it several years before but for the sake of his friend, Mr William Read, a most worthy gentleman, his early friend, but unlucky in business, who took upon him all the active work of the Office and had the largest part of the salary, and his venerable clerk, grown old in his place and having no other support.

Poor old John Willis—he could not believe the possibility of such a catastrophe. It broke his heart, and although my Uncle assured him and his aged daughters against poverty, he never held up his head again, when he left the high stool and desk where he had taken the receipt from almost all our Naval heroes for their Official pay. He was a good creature—very kind to me, giving me my first lessons in swimming, and his name now revives associations with many pleasant summer afternoons on the smooth sands of the Jersey shore.

## Recollections

My Uncle's official duties did not interfere with various commercial enterprises in which his intimate friendship with many of the leading Merchants of Philadelphia, Baltimore and New-York gave him many advantages. I presume the India trade, with which he was fully conversant, may have at first attracted him, but he was afterwards largely concerned in the Madeira business, and imported the finest wines which were brought to the country, from the great houses of Murdoch, of Gordon Duff and F. Scott.

Specimens of these wines are still in my wine-lofts, not appreciated by me as they are by Connoisseurs of such matters.

The profits of this trade and of previous investments, aided by such thrift and economy as were not inconsistent with extensive hospitality and a generous answer to every proper appeal of friendship and charity, enabled him, long before giving up his official station to retire from all other business. He had learnt the true use of money in his youth, and therefore knew how to enjoy it in his advanced age. He did not count his annual accumulations as his chief comfort and consolation at the return of Christmas and the New Year, or care for the esteem which riches alone, could bring.

I never knew a man who combined so perfectly an exact economy with unostentatious generosity.

His contribution was rarely refused to any plan of practical benevolence, although he was, I believe, never a director of any charitable Institution.

When a complimentary present was voted to the Directors of the Old Bank of the United States, he made option of the money instead of a piece of plate, and distrib-

## Family Friends

uted the whole amount, five hundred dollars, between the Orphan and Widows Asylum!

And so it must have been in other instances, for although he had been the unpaid Director of several money corporations, I never saw on his side-board Testimonial pieces of silver.

To poor dependants he was kind and generous, but he ever rejected thanks. They embarrassed him, and he knew the emptiness of words.

So with those who were near to him by relationship, whose only merit was descent from those he loved.

With myself, he stopped every expression of gratitude, saying "you owe me nothing, you pay me as you go."

He was, of course, often applied to for loans, but he would at all times rather give than lend.

When he did lend on bond or note, he expected punctual repayment, except in cases of accumulated distress.

He considered it dishonest to borrow when there was little chance of ability to pay, and in these cases he most frequently passed the debt over as a gift to some other party who would have less delicacy in exacting the return.

To his old friends, however, he was ready to give large assistance, often with considerable inconvenience & risk, as in the case of the insolvency of Mr William Waln, while at the same time he took every possible means to prevent his aged mother from being security for his debts, placing before her the danger of ruin, afterwards too fully verified by the whole family.

Her estate, which was land, & would in another generation have been great wealth to all her descendants, was swept away, & all that the family eventually had to depend on, was Miss Wilcocks's small property which was saved by

## Recollections

the active precautions of my Uncle from the general wreck.

His kindness to the widows & daughters of his friends, whose means were barely enough for livelihood, or who had small encumbered or involved inheritances, was very remarkable.

He would take in hand their affairs gratuitously, make the most advantageous arrangements & investments; if they had claims in any quarter, prosecute them with indefatigable zeal, till he had secured a competence helping along in the interval, & in the end making it appear it was no more than their inheritance.

Nothing could exceed his delicacy in all such cases. To prove my knowledge of this, I would name not only the widow of Mr Waln & her sister, Miss Wilcocks, Mrs Mifflin, Mrs Julian Miller, the daughters of his old friend, W. Coxe, Mrs General Stewart & her daughter, Miss A. Stewart, Mrs J. Sims, Junr., & many others who had from him the best of all kinds of help, which they could accept without any injury to their pride. Through my mother's widowhood & my minority, we owed these services to him.

Our small property was carefully nursed, everything turned to advantage, strict economy instilled, while every possible collateral assistance was given, to myself every honourable stimulus of industry applied, while every injurious expectation of inheritance was held back, till my education was completed, & I could no longer doubt that I was the child of his house & of his heart.

If ever there was a man whom the blessings of the Widow & the Orphan wafted to Heaven, it was my Uncle.

He had acquired his fortune by many years of indus-

## Family Friends

try. The great lesson he had received in 1798, made him shun all hazardous speculations. In all his investments he was satisfied with common interest. Well-selected mortgages & ground-rents seemed to him better than real-estate or stocks.

It was in this form I found his property when I took charge of it at the request of my dear Aunt.

He left an estate valued at about \$400,000, after bequests to his own family, (the children of his brother and sister White, of \$70,000) and large benefactions to all of them through many years of his life, of which I have many memoranda, besides his relinquishment of his share of the Aspden inheritance.

I may mention here some of his most intimate friends among the merchants of old time.

In New-York, Leroy, Bayard & McIvers, of which firm I well remember the two first named as frequent guests at 156 Chestnut Street. Noble-looking old gentlemen with fine figures & address, such as might have become the Merchant Princes of Genoa or Venice— Archibald Gracie & Mr Buchanan.

From Baltimore, Robert Oliver, the two old Robert Gilmors, and Samuel Smith, the latter known as General S. Smith, and for a long time Maryland Senator at Washington. The closest regard united him to my Uncle, in which feeling his brother Robert, who was in Mr Madison's Cabinet, fully shared. The younger Gilmor, a coeval, however, of my Uncle, I saw many times in the year, & enjoyed with him both intimacy & correspondence, confirmed by similar tastes & hobbies.

He was a pleasant, lively, gossipy old gentleman, full

## Recollections

of anecdotes of the great people he had seen in Europe & in this country, and I have several large packages of his letters to my Uncle, from which, when at leisure, I hope to extract some amusing matter.

Eminent among his commercial friends was Colonel Thomas Perkins of Boston, but he might rather be classed with his intimates of a later period than that I refer to.

At the beginning of my Uncle's career in Philadelphia, without counting my Aunt's relations, we had among its most eminent merchants, Mr Fitz-Simmons; Redmond Conyngham; Mr S. Breck; Mr John Ross; Jasper Moylan; Henry Hill; Andrew Bayard; Joseph Sims; & at a somewhat later day, the Walns, Robert & William, Richard Meade, and others, among them many of the most attached friends of Mr Harrison.

I have among his various memoranda, lists of various leading families of Philadelphia, at the different periods of his own life, when he & my Aunt were prominent members of society—in 1792—1806—& 1824; made from memory some time after the latter date.

I now copy the first of these lists, certainly imperfect, as it does not contain the name of Mr Bingham, who was then at the head of fashion.

They are as follows:

Robert Morris	Genl. Wm. Stewart
Samuel Meredith	John Nixon
John Ross	Robert Milligan
Samuel Powel	Lardner & Lardner
Robert Hare	George Clymer
John F. Mifflin	John Penn
Genl. Shee	Redmond Conyngham

## Family Friends

Henry Hill	Colonel Moore
General Dickinson	Jaspar Moylan
Tench Francis	Richard Bache

I may mention that Henry Hill's house was the one afterwards Dr Physick's, corner of Tenth & Union, a bachelor's establishment & the scene of much refined conviviality.

George Clymer resided in Chestnut Street, at the house he had recently built, and a few years later sold to my Uncle, and which was his residence till he died. John Penn, was, I presume, John Penn of Solitude, about whom I shall have something to say elsewhere.

Mr Ross built and lived at the S. E. corner of Second and Pine Streets, a large house still standing.

John Nixon at the N. W. corner of the same streets.

Mr Powel in Third Street, General Stewart in Third just above Union Street.

Colonel Moore in Pine above Second Street; Robert Hare in Vine Street next to his Brewery; John F. Mifflin in Union Street.

Robert Milligan was one of my Uncle's dearest friends, and the interest in him was worthily continued to his sons George & John,—the former, I think, my Uncle's namesake,—and his daughters, the beautiful Mrs Joseph Sims, most unhappily married, and Mrs Louis McLane, one of the most agreeable of women. John Milligan is still living, & the high breeding of the family is transmitted to his children. The whole race seem to possess singular refinement. Old Miss Kitty Milligan, whom I well knew, and who died at above ninety years old, would have done honour to the Faubourg St Germain in its most brilliant days, and I should be sorry to forget her nieces, Mary Christie, now

## Recollections

the widow Wilson, and Mrs S. Jackson, as exhibiting in their extremely pleasing manners, the teachings of the admirable family which educated them.

I can hardly imagine a more delightful society than existed in Philadelphia during President Washington's administration. Our City was then the social as well as the political Capital of the Country, already the largest in population and furnishing all the domestic conveniences for which it has long had a high reputation. There were very few rich families, but hospitalities were cheap, and good House-keeping almost universal. No French Restaurant, or *Confiseur*, was here to supply *recherché* dishes, or artistic *sucreries*, but old black cooks, taught by their mistresses from the large manuscript books of hereditary receipts, sent from their kitchens such roasts and broiled meats, as we in default of hickory fires shall never see again; and such desserts in pastry or fruits or cream, as filled old John Adams and his wife with astonishment and delight, as shown in their letters, so unhappily for them, published by their grandson.

Fashion then (so destructive to modern Society) had little sway in such things, and our leading Merchants and Lawyers, and all our best inhabitants, (except the Quakers) opened their houses to the distinguished people who flocked here from all parts of the Country, and entertained them with lavish but not ostentatious hospitality.

And Philadelphia indeed attracted all that was eminent in the whole country. The best men, the first gentlemen of the land, aspired to place and gained it. From every State we had such; . . . sometimes indeed stiff awkward and pedantic from their provincial antecedents, particularly the New Englanders, but many of these highly educated

## Family Friends

and dignified men. From the South many gentlemen of the best European education, graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, lawyers from Gray's Inn or the Temple, men of large fortune with tastes cultivated by foreign travel, and from homes of already much hereditary refinement; all met together upon the kindest terms, happy in at last forming a Nation, and ready to contribute their share in everything to social enjoyment.

Friendships were then formed between families which have, in mine at least, descended to the fourth and fifth generation.

Everything contributed to improve the social spirit. To have such a head of Society as our noble President, a model of dignity, a standard of honour, whose notice was a passport, whose frown a stigma, was an inestimable advantage.

And all would have gone well for several generations but for that Democratic serpent, Jefferson, who, like his prototype, the one in the Garden of Eden, whispered his devilish lies about human equality into the ear of our people, and aspersed the noble President with his venom, and scattered every falsehood which could stimulate envy and suspicion among those who should have been contented in their own appropriate sphere, and thus planted and fostered the deadly tree of Party, the fruit of which has poisoned our whole people, and brought upon us all the corruption and degradation of which human nature is capable.

I am rather wandering from my theme, but not altogether, for I wish to note the effect of Party upon Society.

It was in the second term of our first President, that its pernicious influences showed themselves. No doubt just indignation was felt at the teaching of the Secretary of State and his hired calumniators. Mr Jefferson was avoided by

## Recollections

all the personal friends of the President; I have heard my Uncle say, many gentlemen would turn away from him in the street, passing on the other side that they might not be compelled to bow to the Vice-President, to whose office deference was due!

I presume a large part of our native society had Federalist opinions.

Mr Jefferson had his coterie, and residing, as I am told, at the low, old-fashioned country-seat on the Schuylkill opposite Bartram's Gardens, he assembled there alternately his admirers or his tools!

There were, undoubtedly, many high-minded men who sided with him in his professed principles of republicanism who could never have dreamt of the legitimate consequences.

Among them were some of my Uncle's friends, and when an effort was made to ostracize them in Society, I am told he would take no part; only he did not ask at the same time to his table, men who could not discuss the topics of the day without great danger of a quarrel.

Thus he maintained to the end of his life the friendship of several leading Democrats, and among them, General Samuel Smith, to whom I referred on a former page.

Unfortunately, my Uncle's correspondence and memoranda of this period are not preserved, and I must needs pass on to a later period to connect him & my Aunt more particularly with the Society of Philadelphia.

I would observe that it does not appear that many gentlemen from a distance, forming part of our National Legislature took houses in Philadelphia, but the President, Vice-President, and heads of Departments only.

Members of Congress were accommodated in Boarding-

## Family Friends

houses, where they messed together, as afterwards at Washington, but in a very different style of living.

The old-fashioned boarding-house of Philadelphia was an institution *sui generis*, the keeper being often a reduced lady, who seemed only to be continuing her accustomed hospitalities and was treated with all the deference of a high-bred hostess. With a cheap market, capital cooks, well-trained servants, every other comfort was associated with what is the greatest of all; cleanliness! and this class of houses was long kept up, and perhaps has even now successors of faint resemblance; but those who recollect Mrs Frazier's, Mrs Benson's, Mrs Lynn's, and others, will not wonder that many a luxurious old bachelor never wanted a better home and that many a passing stranger lingered in such comfortable Quarters for weeks and months, and came again, to the no small advantage of our society, down to the time when I first was acquainted with it.

Among the most comfortable in the time of Washington, was Mrs Payne's, a Quakeress of very respectable parentage. With her, lived her daughter, Dolly Todd, the blooming widow of a poor Quaker School-master. Mr Madison was one of the mess at her house, an innocent shy young man in society, and not accustomed to female blandishments. Aaron Burr was also a convive, and according to his own report, which, as everything that he said must be taken with the benefit of a doubt, he, and others of the party, determined to marry him to the lovely Dolly.

Some flattery was repeated or invented, some confidence adroitly won & betrayed, a correspondence begun in which the widow, whose education was not the best, had the skilful aid of that experienced Lothario, who says he wrote the letters or perhaps verses, which were copied

## Recollections

by her with the best intent. In the end the plot succeeded, as that which united Beatrice & Benedick, and Dolly Todd became in course of years, Lady Presidentess of the United States! She made an excellent wife, largely helped her husband's popularity, made friends everywhere & retained them till her death, & had it not been for her son, the worthless Payne Todd, who gave his stepfather a world of trouble, and who disgraced his mother, & robbed her, forced her to sell her slaves whom Mr Madison intended to be free, the union would have been an ample reward for the skill of its contrivance.

As it was, it produced another evidence of the weakness & want of moral courage, which were the only failings of this good & accomplished man.

At this point, I end a chapter in my social history of Philadelphia, to take it up again early in the present century, & here indeed ended the most brilliant and honourable period of our annals.

Washington retired to Mount Vernon, his place never could be filled by his successor, & the party spirit then rising broke up much that was agreeable in social intercourse.

Soon after, the seat of Government was to be removed, & although many strangers still resorted to Philadelphia, and many of the Representatives of Foreign Powers still kept houses there, the change was of course going on, & all for the worse.

Then there were great changes in our native society.

Mr Powel had died in 1793, & his widow made every proper show of grief for several years. The Francis family had their afflictions, first, in the death of my Uncle, Mr

## Family Friends

John Francis, & then my Grandfather's, but before this last event, came the failure of Robert Morris, dragging so many of our best families into poverty ; & soon after, the death of Mrs Bingham, whom her husband did not long survive.

Repetitions of the fearful pestilence of 1793, in 1797 & 1798, diffused gloom and terror, and drove away many residents.

The century ended sadly for Philadelphia in every respect, & when General Washington died, & soon after, Mr Jefferson succeeded to Mr Adams, we may well suppose that many a good & patriotic heart was saddened with the accumulated present misfortunes, and deep forebodings of the future.

My Uncle found himself for the first time a poor man, but he had no one to provide for but his wife, & she submitted with the best possible grace, to her fate.

I have in her handwriting a list of expensive furniture, mirrors, etc., which she disposed of to her brother and friends; & their housekeeping was placed on a footing of the closest economy. It did not, however, even in those days, preclude simple hospitality. Their faithful servants remained. Old Hannah Carney would make a simple menu of two dishes (a fish & a joint), a creditable dinner for the most honoured guest, & a supper of oysters on wooden platters was the pleasant termination of many a party to the neighbouring theatre, then made attractive by an admirable company of Actors.

Hallam & Harwood & Hook & Warren, Mrs Merry & Whitlock, presented genteel comedy as it probably could not be performed in our days, even in London, & my Aunt's taste for the Drama was confirmed, which

## Recollections

seemed to remain unabated through her life. There was no such patron of the theatre, & the second Box on the left hand seemed to be hers by prescription whenever she wished to occupy it.

Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, Opera or Ballet, all attracted her.

In later days she assembled her party at the tea table, & we went in a body to the old theatre. The jolly suppers were before my day. They had gone out of fashion, & my dear friends were old. But I heard much of the fun and gayety which prevailed at them, when the wits or songsters of the day kept the table in a roar, till the early morning hours were called by the watchman, & all who wished to go to bed sober, found it time to retire.

My Uncle and Aunt, with all their fondness for the theatre, never would invite actors to their house. Some of the most distinguished brought letters, but even the high standing of the Bartletts, McCready, and the Kembles, would not induce them to relax their rule. Perhaps they had known, in the families of Alexander J. Dallas, and others of their friends inconvenient results; perhaps the old-fashioned ideas about vagrants may have prejudiced them against the hired ministers of their amusements, but they were kind & compassionate toward them in misfortune, & I knew of loans & gifts to superannuated & unfortunate actors, tendered with a consideration & delicacy which greatly enhanced the kindness.

With an assured place in the Society of their native city, they were never ashamed of their diminished fortune, & their house was, perhaps, even the more attractive to their friends for the grace & cordiality which did not seek to excuse deficiencies.

## Family Friends

Their hospitalities expanded with their means, and, at the time of my earliest recollections, hardly twelve years from the date of their misfortunes; the dear old house at 156 Chestnut Street was a constant scene of elegant hospitality, when all that was refined in our native society met most of the distinguished strangers for whom Philadelphia offered attractions, which, it is feared, are now lost forever.

From time to time the simple furniture of their house and table was replaced by importations from France and England, selected chiefly by their friends, Mr Walter Stirling, & Madame Hottinguer. Carved walnut succeeded to painted wood, rich satins to cotton chintz and cut glass & fine porcelain to the Canton china-ware and pewter.

My parlours are still provided with the somewhat faded furniture which was thought very splendid in its day, and my table glass & china remind me of banquets, which, according to my recollection, were more delicious than anything they present in my occupancy.

They had no pictures or statuary. My Uncle & Aunt knew nothing of Art, and did not pretend to a taste which they had no opportunity to acquire. A few good prints by Morghen & others hung in their smaller apartments and Bunberry's or Gilray's caricatures were brought forward when conversation flagged, for this was long before the days of albums & photographs.

I need not go beyond this point to speak of my Uncle's & Aunt's talents for society. To any who still recollect them, I would appeal for the confirmation of my picture, which may be slightly coloured by affection, but which will not come up to the flattering terms in which others have described them.

Uninterrupted intercourse with the best company from

## Recollections

childhood, & singular grace of person, not only made them easy in their own manners and carriage, but relieved their guests from all the restraints of a first introduction.

The most timid & shy at once were at their ease, and assurance & vulgarity only, were abashed.

Without the slightest appearance of hauteur, which was inconsistent with their nature, they never permitted impudent familiarity.

Coarseness and indecency were never tolerated, my Aunt seemed not to understand it, my Uncle could soon suppress it, and the offender was not likely to be again invited.

Fond of news and the gossip of the day, there was less scandal circulated, than in any drawing-room of the time.

It was a singular fact, that those who elsewhere indulged in immoral talk or doubtful jests, never uttered them here, & when my Aunt heard of it, she would hardly believe it, for she had never heard such conversation in her presence.

And therefore she received, especially in her old age, with kindness, those who had somewhat lost caste beyond her immediate circle, for she was extremely unwilling to listen to scandalous stories.

She never believed anything to the disadvantage of a friend while it was possible to doubt, & especially defended her female acquaintances from defamation, as long as was possible.

She was not accomplished, she could not talk with the knowledge, or affectation of a connoisseur of Art, but she read the lighter literature and was familiar with the current topics of the day, & could listen at least with intelligence & enjoyment to clever men, & that is often all they want.

My Uncle, who had seen more of the world and men,

## Family Friends

& whose favourite reading was modern Memoirs & Travels, had more to contribute to the common stock of conversation.

He had a considerable fund of humour, and a very keen sense of the ridiculous. The opportunity for a funny remark was not often missed, and the twinkle of his eye generally gave notice of a joke to be uttered or restrained, for his pleasantry was always within the limits of becoming mirth.

If he told a story, it was without tediousness.

I never heard him utter a pun, nor can I record any extraordinary witticism, but his native vein of humour gave a pleasant turn to conversation, & his sly jokes made even dullness laugh! It might indeed be said of him that he was

*“Grave with the wise, and with the witty, gay!”*

Such a host at the head of his table made the long series of courses then in vogue, & the concluding symposium something better than a gratification of ignoble tastes, or the tedious ceremony it often is to those who are above them.

And we may well believe that the numerous entertainments to which I shall soon refer, were scenes of refined enjoyment, whether they assembled quiet citizens, who talked of India voyages, their farms & horses, & the price of stocks, or guests whose eminent names & position convince us that the fine wine suggested better topics than their vintages, & all the tedious minutiae in which gourmets are interested.

I am told that in the beginning of the century, it was usual for every gentleman's dinner to provide as many bottles of Madeira as there were guests, besides French wines, and there were some not very willing to leave the

## Recollections

table while they could circulate the decanter, but these were not my Uncle's frequent guests. He was a very temperate man himself, and in my recollection did not habitually take wine at all.

At his dinner-parties, he had by his side a decanter of deeply coloured toast-water, with which he answered the necessary pledges, without being afraid of a bumper, and he told me that the only occasion when he lost his head, was when acting as *croupier* at the end of a table, at a grand dinner given by the citizens of Philadelphia to General Washington, on his last visit to our city, to take command of the Army in the threatened War with France.

I may mention that I do not remember any wines at his table, but the vintages of Madeira & France. There was no store of Port, or Hock, or Sherry in his cellar at his death.

Punch, which was formerly offered before dinner, and toddy afterwards, were entirely gone out of fashion. Even Ale and Beer, though at hand, were rarely called for.

He never offered cigars except when his Brother-in-law, the Bishop, was present, to whom he felt he could hardly refuse them, as he had himself taught him to smoke when a boy, but it had become peculiarly disagreeable to him, and by his special wish I ever abstained from the use of tobacco in every form.

My Aunt, too, seemed in her element at the head of her hospitable board. Every arrangement had been made under her eye, the four or five courses with their separate glass & porcelain succeeded each other without a trace of anxiety on her countenance.

She was "mistress of herself though china fall," while she performed her own part with habitual grace.

## Family Friends

She helped to the dishes before her as the old rules of hospitality required, she carved beautifully, & had an art, I never knew so perfect, of helping even shad or herring without bones.

My Uncle, too, was a master of the art, and gave me many lessons.

This custom has long gone out at fashionable dinners, but still was *en règle*, when I was first in Europe.

At the greatest houses, & even at the Palace of Louis Philippe of France, the King and Queen made a show of helping from the dishes placed before them.

Card-tables were sometimes spread in the Drawing-room after dinner, but I only recollect them as occupied by the members of the Foreign Legations, or other Europeans, such as Mr David Parish, & some such, to whose nightly repose a rubber or two for guinea points were perhaps more necessary than their prayers.

My Uncle had a horror of gambling, & never took a hand but on compulsion. In his youth, it was a universal social custom, and I have heard him tell stories of the Dowagers who were addicted to it, which did not elevate its effects much above ineptitude.

When alone, the backgammon board was always placed on the table after dinner for two or three games before my Aunt's siesta, and piquet was a frequent resource in the evening.

A board, & pack of cards were always placed in their travelling carriage, to give occupation to the hours of necessary rest.

Such was their house & table for a quarter of a century, and through that period from 1810, I have memoranda of dinners & receptions recurring at a few days' intervals

## Recollections

through almost every year, which bring up to my memory the shadowy forms of many eminent men and charming women, the names of some of whom I shall present, with such notices and anecdotes as my memory has preserved.

In the list of citizens whose houses were open for company in Philadelphia at different periods, I find the following names, which are those of their personal friends or acquaintances living in the year 1810.

T. W. Francis	Benjamin Chew
William Waln	Wilson Hunt
S. W. Fisher	James Lyle
J. Hopkinson	William Rawle
Pierce Butler	James Yard
R. E. Griffith	Robert Waln
General George Izard	J. S. Lewis
Henry Pratt	Saml. Mifflin
John Vaughan	E. Burd
Thos. Mayne Willing	R. Davis
Richard Wilcocks	Joseph Sims
George Reinholt	Richard Peters
Andrew Bayard	William Read

Passing by my Uncle Thomas Willing Francis, & his cousin & partner in business, Mr Thomas Mayne Willing, whom I may mention with some particulars elsewhere, I come to Robert & William Waln, at that time among our wealthy merchants, and gentlemen of more education and liberality than most of the sect from which they sprang.

William Waln at least had travelled & acquired many refined tastes. He was the most intimate friend of my father from boyhood.

## Family Friends

Their fathers' houses were adjoining, they were school-fellows under Robert Proud, & had at the same time desks in the Counting House of Joshua Fisher & Sons.

About the year 1810, Mr Waln built the beautiful house after the plans of Latrobe, which occupied the S.E. corner of Seventh & Chestnut Streets painted & furnished in the classical taste of the day, *à la mode de l'Empire*. His wife, Mary Wilcocks, was one of the most elegant & refined women in Society, & a career of hospitalities was opened, destined to be cut short in a few years by commercial adversity. It is said that his father, old Nicholas Waln, the eminent lawyer, who was alive at the time the house was built, wrote with chalk on the door, "To be sold by the Sheriff," & so it was!

Robert Waln was a gentleman of more than usual mental culture, & universally respected.

He was in the beginning of the Century elected to Congress as one of the Representatives of his native city. He was the occupant of a fine large house he had built on Second Street, on the site of Edward Shippen's mansion, known as the Governor's House.

He too was crushed in the great commercial convulsion which put an end to the India Trade of our city.

Richard Wilcocks, was brother of Mrs William Waln.

Joseph S. Lewis and S. W. Fisher need only be mentioned as hospitable *bon-vivants*, & popular men.

Reinholdt & Hunt, old bachelors, whose place in educated or refined society I never could understand, unless, when housekeepers, they had helped to exhaust their means by hospitalities still remembered by their friends.

Hunt was one of the coarsest gluttons I ever knew, Reinholdt the most extraordinary swearer.

## Recollections

Every sentence had one “damme” at least. He was shrewd & honourable, & made himself useful to his friends, like one of the serviceable old bachelors described by Addison & Irving, and useful always in filling a sudden gap at a table. He was of very low origin, I am told his Aunt was a huckster in our market, which may be mentioned to show that our aristocracy was not more exclusive in his time than ours. I think my Uncle maintained him in the last years of his life, when he died of cancer in the lip, attributed to inordinate smoking.

Lyle, an Irishman, whom I have mentioned in my account of the Hamilton family.

Davis, an Englishman of very good manners.

R. E. Griffith, also an Englishman, father of Mrs Edward Coleman, who built the place of Eaglesfield, occupying one of the loveliest sites on the Schuylkill.

Mr Pratt, who bought and embellished the place of Robert Morris opposite and changed its name to Lemon Hill, a plain, worthy, & successful merchant, whose inheritance was the foundation of the fortune of his son-in-law, Dundas, and his grandson, Pratt McKean.

Joseph Sims, whose chief distinctions were his fortune & his ambitious house at the S. W. corner of Chestnut & Ninth Streets, afterwards E. S. Burd's, who married his niece, & took the house to secure the portion of his wife, when the common fate of our merchants overtook the Uncle who, I believe, owed his ruin to speculations in land which he could not hold long enough.

Samuel Mifflin, my Aunt's cousin, who dropped the name of Francis to inherit the fortune of his maternal Grandfather, which he soon lost through the instrumentality of his wife's relations.

## Family Friends

Mr N. Crammond and Erich Bollman, the latter a most unprincipled man, of considerable acquirement & address, both of them sons-in-law of Mr John Nixon.

Samuel Mifflin had married Mr Nixon's ward & niece, the beautiful & fascinating Betsey Davis, of whom I may speak elsewhere. His life was one of hard struggle with adversity, & he died of hereditary gout at the very moment when he had a chance of retrieving his fortunes. Universally beloved by his relations and friends.

Mr Andrew Bayard was one of my Uncle's most valued & constant friends and like others of his name, a very handsome man. He was for a long time President of the Commercial Bank, and has many worthy descendants among us.

Benjamin Chew, son of the Chief Justice, from youth to age a kind and amiable man, hospitable to the stretch of his disordered fortune. An old beau in manners, he was what some called a gentleman of the old school. Certainly we see none such now. He must have been very good-looking in his youth, and one could not doubt that he was born a gentleman.

His place of Cliveden, still preserved in all its shabbiness, the old carriage, were a piece with his decayed gentility.

William Read, one of my Uncle's early friends, and owing much to that friendship in the decline of life, a most worthy gentleman. Son of George Read of the Congress of 1776, his wife was the daughter of Archibald McCall, and a large family of honourable descendants are perhaps the best evidence of their parents' worth.

Richard Peters was the son of the witty Judge, and husband of my mother's favourite cousin, Abby Willing.

## Recollections

He was a lawyer of some ability, & afterwards reporter of the Supreme Court. He was a man of lively conversation, & had the advantage of a large acquaintance here & at Washington. He formed a part of the literary circle, of which Mr Denny was the head, & his house on Walnut Street above Third, afterwards Mr Chauncey's, and his later residences, were scenes of much hospitality. He had, however, no great consideration nor popularity among my friends.

John Vaughan, one of the names best known *out of the City*, called by some, the Providence of Strangers, and supposed by our European travellers, at least, who so recorded it in their books, to be an Official, appointed by our Municipality to receive & introduce foreign visitors; was an Englishman by birth, son of Dr Samuel Vaughan, who with Dr Priestly, & other Socinians, fled from persecution in England.

He was in France with Dr Franklin, as a sort of private secretary, of which he was very proud.

He told some pleasant stories about the Philosopher, of which I only recollect the ones respecting his reception at Versailles, where on donning his court-suit of plain cut velvet, he found his wig, then a requisite *couverc-hef*, was much too small for his head, but he was obliged to accept the adroit apology of his Perruquier, *Pardon, Monsieur, c'est que votre tête est trop grande*, and go to Court without it, where, if he received from his lady admirers a crown of laurel, his Secretary, Mr Vaughan, knew nothing about it.

Mr Vaughan was a merchant without any system or power of calculation, & ended as might be expected. He was appointed Treasurer & Librarian of the Philosophical Society, where the general confusion that prevailed in the

## Family Friends

Library is shown by the Catalogue & in the Accounts, by an investigation after his death, giving rise to some, I think, ill-natured suspicions.

While he had a house & a purse of his own, both were freely open to his friends and the destitute, & if the Society lost in one form, it gained mere wealth, for he was an indefatigable solicitor for its collections, and gained many presents & bequests in return for his own kind attentions.

For many years, in the days of Steam-boats, when the routes North and South were by the River, he was on the watch for strangers at every arrival, & at once became the welcome cicerone of every person of note, or of those who came in any way recommended.

Being particularly intimate with the whole colony of Carolinians on Spruce Street, he claimed all their friends as his, & he offered more services than it was possible for him to perform.

The widow & descendants of Ralph Izard forgot that he had been the Secretary and protégé of that detested "Yankee Mechanic," who had been associated with him so much to his *disgust*. Indeed Johnny Vaughan disarmed all prejudice by his active benevolence, while his friends laughed at his weakness, & listened to his stories with some allowance for the exaggerations of vanity, they felt after all that he was a kind-hearted gentleman.

His comfortable rooms at the Philosophical Hall were his residence from my earliest recollection, till his death in 1841, & where I frequently met, at breakfast, distinguished travellers, or literary men from other States, when a simple & unceremonious meal was often more to our fancy, than the luxurious repasts of richer men.

## Recollections

Mr Vaughan was also one of the original members of the Wistar Club, which in his time met in the Library, & supped in his private apartment. To his old age, when 84 or 85, he still frequented society of all kinds, & I have often seen him at balls, after midnight, to which he had gone on foot, in spite of storm or ice, in his bright plaid cloak, under his parti-coloured red & blue umbrella.

His Memoirs are preserved elsewhere, and his memory is held dear at our Institute for the Blind, of which he was a founder.

Though one of the Unitarian Sect, & a reader at the little Chapel, established for their worship, when they had no regular minister, no one avoided him for his heresy, & he, on his part, had not reached the modern illumination of his sect, or imagined that negro-slavery was a crime and the Constitution a “League with Hell.”

The good Mr Sparks at Baltimore, & Dr Gilman at Charleston, with their congregations of slave-holders, were strangely blind to their wickedness.

When I looked for the last time on his pinched and shrivelled face, laid out in the Society’s Library, I felt that I had lost a friend, with whom I could associate many pleasant scenes.

His funeral was followed from the Hall by many mourners. He had a “Tomb of Orphan’s tears wept o’er him,” & we all felt a good man had gone to his rest!

Mr Edward Burd, who married my mother’s cousin, daughter of Chief Justice Shippen, was a very fine-looking gentleman, with the height & air of General Washington. He had been in the Army of the Revolution, & reached, I think, the rank of Colonel. He adopted the legal profession, & was considered a sound lawyer, but obtained,

## Family Friends

I think, through family influence, the lucrative place of Prothonotary, which several of the Shippen family had held. I have heard that on his marriage, he was so poor that he occupied a small house in Strawberry Alley, and that the family all contributed from their stock of furniture for his outfit; but he died a very rich man living at the house which perhaps he built, in Chestnut Street, below 8th, afterwards successively occupied by his daughters, Mrs D. W. Coxe & Miss Burd, & still standing. I think I may say he was universally respected for his integrity & sound sense.

William Rawle, in 1810, occupied the house, originally my Aunt Powel's, in Third Street; No. 244, still standing, though without the side lot and separate office.

Elsewhere may be found a tribute to his legal acquirements and forensic talents.

Descended from one of the very few Quaker families which could claim the rank of gentleman, he did not belie his birth; but his education in England, after his nineteenth year had perhaps much to do with the refinement of his manners & the cultivation of his tastes. I was thrown much with him, when I became at an early age, a member of the Historical Society. He was President, & he encouraged my antiquarian pursuits, and I greatly enjoyed his society. I have his own private copy of his work on the Constitution, presented to me by his daughter, for years a text-book in our Institutions, and even at West Point, though now decried, because he denied to the general Government the right of forcible coercion of a State. His Constitutional interpretations surely have more value than the dicta of modern lawyers, for he was District-Attorney of Pennsylvania, & was offered the Attorney-General-

## Recollections

ship by Washington, & associated intimately with the framers of the Constitution; & must have known well the opinions of all the great Judges and Lawyers of his day.

But this is *obiter dictum*.

Mr Rawle was an accomplished scholar and a very religious man. He had many sorrows. He lost a charming wife, whom I well remember, a favourite daughter, and, when past middle life, he was reduced to poverty through the bankruptcy of his son, & was obliged to sell his pleasant houses in town & country, and try again the practice of law, when the Courts had already deteriorated in their tone if not in their ability. He gave an example of high-breeding & dignity, which could not have failed to impress the younger generation.

It is not necessary to speak of Joseph Hopkinson in his political or judicial capacity, or yet to remind my readers that he was the author of "Hail Columbia!" He was, as a member of society, one of the most agreeable men in Philadelphia. We had few who talked so well. He had once been a student, & was familiar with the literature of his youth. What was modern, he despised. He seemed almost too lazy to read what was new, or, if so, did not appreciate it. He would have taken side for the Ancients, in the "Battle of the Books."

What, however, was always fresh with him, was his wit. This was somewhat deteriorated by an inveterate habit of punning, which, I understand, was the daily and hourly exercise of his whole family, so that no word which could be twisted into a *double-entendre* could escape even in the soberest hours. His wife, an illegitimate daughter of Governor Mifflin, had also great life and cleverness. To

## Family Friends

her were addressed Moore's lines on the Schuylkill. Nothing could be gayer than their coterie, though their humour was too often decidedly broad.

Judge Hopkinson was a frequent guest of my Uncle, & while his serious talk was heard with interest, he often enlivened the conversation by his jokes & repartees. He was one of the most careless of men in his dress that ever presented himself, spitting everywhere & not always clearing himself. His clothes were dirty & shabby, & his hair unkempt. I witnessed his death-stroke in 1842, which was an apoplectic attack, which seized him while reading in the Athenæum.

James Yard was, I think, about my Uncle's age, and an early acquaintance. He was stepfather of Mrs Charles Kuhn, having married a rich widow of his own name. He himself was the son of a worthy woman, who kept as a Boarding-house the old slate Mansion in Second Street, William Penn's old dwelling. He was a sarcastic man, with a very cynical expression. He possessed, I believe, some wit, and was certainly, by comparison, a scholar. He read and cited Martial's "Epigrams" & often frightened my latinity out of its wits, by his questions or quotations.

Of Major Butler I have a little more to say, for I saw a good deal of him when I was a school-boy, & have heard a great deal since, from those who knew him from the time of his arrival in this country about 1765 when he came out with his regiment. Bishop White well recollects him, as the youthful Major of an Irish Regiment, when he presented himself with his brother-officers at the Communion in Christ's Church. He was a younger son of a numerous family. His father, a Baronet of several generations, was descended from an Earl of Ormonde of a previous century.

## Recollections

The wording of the Peerage gives doubtful assurance of the ancestor's legitimacy. He was quite a Sir Lucius O'Trigger, in his matrimonial aspirations, & his readiness to fight on all occasions.

When his regiment was ordered to Carolina, he tried his fortune with several heiresses, and finally ran off with Mary, a daughter of Colonel Thomas Middleton, a younger brother of Henry of the Congress of 1775.

She had a fine fortune, not only from her father, but from her mother, who was heiress of Governor Bull. This was settled on her, to the no small annoyance of the Major. He determined to get it into his hands, demanded the deeds, and challenged the Trustee; but in vain, General Pinckney would neither yield nor fight. Finally, Mr Butler (for he had resigned his commission) carried off the slaves in a body, to settle the plantations in Georgia, which he had recently acquired. Before he reached the Savannah River, he was overtaken by the Sheriff and his Posse, but Mr Butler's escort was more numerous, or better armed, or more determined, & he effected the passage of the river and was safe from further pursuit, for the Government of Carolina, in those early days, had no Federal authority to appeal to.

In those days, negro slaves were not very numerous in Georgia, for Oglethorpe had hoped to preserve his Colony from the curse of slavery; so the plantations settled were probably those which yielded so large an income in after years.

I have heard Major Butler's name connected with other transactions, e.g. the famous Yazoo purchase; & he was said to be associated with Major Gibbons of New Jersey, whose transactions in Georgia were of a questionable character.

## Family Friends

In the end, after his wife's death, he got possession of most of her lands; his daughters yielding to his influence, his son discarded and banished from his house, because he insisted on his rights.

At his death, his daughter Frances, who was his executrix, kept the will unrecorded for a year, hoping to pass the whole estate as an inheritance from her mother, but the documents were believed to be destroyed, or the evidence of compulsion insufficient.

So the will was executed, & the estate transmitted to Pierce Butler (Mease) who had dropped in time the terminal.

Major Butler had left the whole estate to the three sons of his daughter Sarah, Mrs Mease, on condition of their taking the name of Butler, before their arrival at the age of 16! The eldest son, Thomas, died within a year, and made his brothers promise to refuse the estate on condition; but Pierce, the youngest, repented in time to save his chance, and shared the inheritance, when it accrued to him alone, with his brother John, who had forfeited it.

A still older brother, Pierce, was to have been the sole heir, but he died a child, and his Grandfather built him a vault in Christ Church Yard, over which is a monument with a very curious inscription.

His daughter, Sarah, had married Dr Mease against her Father's consent, who ever treated & spoke of his Son-in-law with the most profound contempt.

He was a little man, very handsome, always well-dressed and polite, a dabbler in science & the author of some very poor books.

His Father, old John Mease, the last wearer of a cocked hat in Philadelphia that I remember, was Collector of

## Recollections

Taxes; & being a defaulter, Dr Mease took some money which Major Butler gave his son-in-law (to build a barn on a farm near Derby, which he permitted him to occupy) to save his parent from disgrace; an act which excited great indignation in the Major, who was still more enraged when he found the agriculturist had appropriated another sum, given for the same or some similar object, to the purchase of *merino sheep*, for which he had positively refused to supply the funds.

To others, the former malversation would have some palliation, but the Major, perhaps, thought that there was very little character to save in a race he so heartily despised.

The Doctor was himself almost excluded from society on account of his peculiar behaviour to Governor Mifflin, who had been his friend and patron, and had bestowed upon him the office of Port-Physician. In a moment of political revolution, when the tide was rapidly turning, Mease wrote a malicious attack on his Patron, & sent it to Cobbett to be printed anonymously in *Porcupine's Gazette*, which Cobbett printed, with the private note which accompanied it, enjoining secrecy!

Mrs Mease was an exceedingly lady-like person, an invalid, & I think a querulous one. She was much more of a reader than most of her contemporaries, and had the reputation of a free-thinker. It is said she would not have a Bible in her house, & forbade her children to read it, as very improper! She let them go to the Unitarian Church as being the one where they could derive least harm, as there was little or no religion preached there!

I suppose her sisters were like her in this respect, for Miss Eliza Butler, who was the last survivor, became very uneasy, when she heard her nephew Pierce Butler (Mease)

## Family Friends

had become a church member. She sent to an intimate friend, to see what could be done, "for," said she, "I think he must be crazy. I hear he is becoming religious, and, you know, none of the Butlers ever had any religion."

Miss Fannie Butler, the eldest sister, was always represented to me as a remarkably sensible woman. She lived in perfect retirement. When a boy I saw much of them at the old mansion, corner of 8th & Chestnut Streets and at Butler Place, for I was intimate with the Meases, particularly Tom.

All three of the sons are dead now, since I wrote the last line, Pierce having died of congestive chills on the Plantation in Georgia, which he had determined to cultivate by the labour of freedmen, an experiment few but himself believed the success of.

The name of Butler is now extinct in America; for it is presumed Dr Owen Wister, who married Pierce's eldest daughter, will not care to perpetuate it in his only son.

The real representative is Lewis Butler, the son of Thomas, only son of the old Major, of whom I will write a few paragraphs, before completing my sketch of his Father.

I knew him very well towards the end of his life, and I think, attended his funeral from his residence in Chestnut Street above Tenth, to the separate vault which he had carefully constructed in Christ Church Yard, not caring to lie beside his father, who had disinherited, and nephews who had supplanted him.

This vault which he was so anxious to have as thoroughly dry as cement and double walls could make it, & in which, it is said, he placed a stove, whether to prepare against premature burial, or to exclude dampness — was,

## Recollections

sometime after his funeral, found to be filled with water, from some accident, & for aught I know, his coffin is still floating!

He was an exceedingly precise, gentlemanly, and had been a handsome person, very proud & punctilious.

But for this, he might have been reconciled to his father, who repented on his death-bed of his treatment of his only son, & desired his daughter Frances, to write to him to offer his forgiveness, but the brother would make no concession nor admit any fault to be forgiven, & a second message to return without condition reached him too late, for he was then in Europe, and neither the telegraph nor ocean steamer could expedite the mission of mercy.

After his father's death he returned to America. He married a Mademoiselle Malveaux, a Frenchwoman of Martinique, where her mother had a great inheritance, large even after emancipating her slaves.

The father had been an Admiral, or at least Captain, in the naval service of Louis XVI, and when his Royal Master was murdered by the revolutionary government, abandoned the service of his Country, & either surrendered his ship to the enemy, or to the Agents of the Royal Family. His wife came to the United States with her beautiful daughter & only child, who captivated Mr Butler at Balston Springs.

Under the influence of her mother she consented to marry him, but the incompatibility of their dispositions made the marriage a miserable one, to the pretty lively Frenchwoman.

He could not trust her in Society, where she courted attentions in all innocence, & shut her up in the dismal

## Family Friends

house on the York Road, opposite Butler Place, where she had no associates but those he chose to bring there. He afterwards took her to her mother in France, where they were separated. She bore him several children, two sons & a daughter, whom he brought with him to America. One son only survived, if indeed he is still living, a Frenchman in all his feelings.

He came to this country to secure what was left to him, but soon left in disgust.

A friend told me he was standing with him at an hotel window, on a crowded thoroughfare. Lewis Butler asked my friend to count all who passed within the space of ten minutes; when he gave the number, Mr Butler asked him on how many faces he had observed a smile? As no sign of gayety had been observed, he said, "Do you think I could live in such a damned country, where out of so many scores of passengers, not one seemed to have a pleasant thought!"

The same strange propensity which presided over the erection of a vault, promoted the erection of a building designed as a residence for this solitary man, in the last few years of his life & which, indeed, he did not live to occupy.

It is the Club-house at the northwest corner of Walnut & 13th Streets.

It was built with double walls & roof, double sashes of plate-glass, solid floors of yellow-pine boards, selected each, so that there should not be a knot or other defect, & no rooms communicating; the consequence being that every chimney smoked for want of a draught.

When bought by the Philadelphia Club, this difficulty was overcome by judicious air-holes.

The building cost upwards of \$80,000, and with its

## Recollections

furniture, almost exhausted Mr Butler's available means—English oil-cloths & carpets for every room, & every article of furniture ordered by scores.

His own personal wardrobe, which he left by his will to the carpenter & builder of the house, was found to number each article by the hundred. He directed that his son should not sell the house for less than it cost, nor rent it.

In consequence he had to buy it in his own name out of his maternal inheritance, before he could make any disposition of it. Of course it only sold for about half, being unsuited for any private family.\*

Colonel Drayton, Mr Butler's executor, told me that after paying the tax and the handsome annuities to his servants & his carpenter, there was nothing left.

Thus ended the estate of this line, & only the recent death of his nephew, Pierce, has saved any portion of the great inheritance of the proud old Major.

What is left will pass to the descendants of an actress, with the name of an humble German Quaker family, whose alliance he would have scorned. If I am not mistaken, he had a quarrel with the grandfather of Dr Wister who had some co-terminous property, in the neighbourhood of Germantown. I have never been able to ascertain what made Major Butler so important a man in South Carolina. Not his birth, for there were many others of as good blood; not his wealth, for that was surpassed by others; not his talents as a statesman, for he has left no evidence of them; but he was a member of the Confederate Congress, of the Convention to frame the Constitution of the Union, & was twice elected afterwards to the National Senate.

\* It is now, 1925, held at \$1,000,000. S. C.

## Family Friends

He was beyond all men, violent & contrary, & many droll stories are preserved of him. On one occasion, in the Senate of the United States, when his opinions were disputed, he is said to have thrown down his glove, on the floor, as a challenge to all opposers! On another occasion when examined as a Director of the old United States Bank, before a Court of Law, he insisted on the right of giving testimony on his honour. He thought, that as a Senator of the United States, he ought, according to the privilege granted to a Peer of the British Realm, to testify, without the humiliation of kissing the Book.

There is quite an amusing & well-told story of Major Butler, in the Biography of Isaac Hopper, the Quaker abolitionist, printed in Simpson's "Lives of Eminent Philadelphians." It is particularly well-narrated, & illustrates the quiet & provoking pertinacity of the Quaker, which triumphed over the violent proud aristocrat, in the cause of a slave. I have no doubt it was even more amusing to the spectators, for I myself witnessed a scene of a kindred nature.

Here might be quoted a story of his refusing to permit a sail to be tacked, when he was reclining in its shade, on a voyage from Charleston, and the . . . skipper acquiesced!

And his challenge to old Ogle, or House, the Carriage-builder!

The Meases were my school-mates under James P. Espy, of subsequent celebrity, who had been partner, & was then, successor of Mr J. Wilson, one of the best of our old-time School-masters.

The School was in the upper rooms of the Free Quaker Meeting, at the corner of Arch & 5th Streets, now the Apprentices' Library.

## Recollections

Espy had flogged John Mease. The grandfather was furious, & came to the School determined to exact punishment, or at least an apology.

After a violent verbal attack on the young Irish School-master, who was by no means terrified, the Major raised his cane to chastise his insolence in the presence of the whole School!

Espy quietly seized the old man by the collar of his coat with both hands, & held him against one of the forms, till he had exhausted his rage, with all manner of oaths & vituperations. I can vividly recall the scene, & could mark the spot in the school-room.

The Major, with what dignity he could assume, called his grandsons to him & marched out of the room, not without a parting malediction.

Such was Major Butler, often named among the great men of our early times. His kindness to his slaves, and a pretty generous hospitality, are among the good things remembered of him. He was a domestic tyrant, & some think he drove his wife to madness, but the peculiarity of all her children would lead me to suppose it was fully a part of her blood.

In Politics he was generally of the Democratic School. He was a personal friend of Aaron Burr, & received him at his plantations when the odium of the death of Hamilton drove him into retirement. His residence was the great & gloomy house at the corner of Chestnut & 8th Streets, built by Dr [blank] & at Butler Place, a poor seat on the York Road.

There was some stateliness, but no elegance about him. He had fine horses, & fine wine, the large stock of which,

## Family Friends

divided among them by his descendants, had quite a name in its day and some specimens of which may still be found.

He died in 1822.

The next person on my Uncle's list of acquaintances is General George Izard.

He was the eldest son of Mr Ralph Izard of the Revolutionary Congress, & Commissioner with Franklin to France, & was placed by his father at a Military School in France, thus entering the American Army with more than usual professional attainments. He served with distinction during the Second War with England, & died, I think, Governor of the Territory of Arkansas, but it is only of his social relations I have to speak.

He lived for many years in Philadelphia & its neighbourhood, and was a frequent guest of my Uncle's. A fine-looking, portly man, of rather haughty demeanour, but polished manners,—this is all I recollect of him. His wife, whom I saw more frequently, had been very handsome, and was distinguished for her conversation and wit. She was a granddaughter, by a first marriage, of Colonel Byrd of Westover, afterwards the husband of my grandmother's sister, Mary.

Her mother had married a Major Farley, of the British Army, who had estates in the Island of Antigua.

The only daughter of this marriage, a belle and an heiress, had her fortune told her by a negro woman, who promised her eighteen feet of husband! And she married successively: Mr Bannister of Virginia; Thomas Lee Shippen; and George Izard; all of them six-footers! The first husband died soon after his marriage, leaving a large estate to an only son.

Tom Shippen soon consoled the widow by a second

## Recollections

nuptials, and hedied too, leaving an only son, who inherited from his half-brother, Bannister, his whole estate, by the then Virginia law of intestacy,—since altered, I am told, on account of this very result.

How many years of widow-hood intervened before Mrs Shippen accepted the hand of Captain Izard, I do not know, but he was only one of a numerous band of suitors, whom the gay and brilliant lady led in her train through places of fashionable resort.

She had three sons of the name of Izard, whose fate was unfortunate, and all are dead.

Her son born to Mr Shippen was the Dr William Shippen who lived till within a few months of 1867: a much respected citizen, zealous in religion, and all good and charitable works.

The estate of Farley which his mother purchased & designated from his paternal name, was on the Neshaminy. It was built by Andrew Allen, & after Mrs Izard's death, passed into the hands of many owners, the last of whom is Mr Dixon, son-in-law to Mr G. M. Dallas. A few years ago it was accidentally burned, and has been rebuilt by Mr Dixon. It is seen from the Trenton R. R., & is well situated, surrounded, apparently, by a park of noble trees.

The times are long passed, when a dashing widow could lead a *cortège* of beaux, through Watering places, & Theatres, & all other places of fashionable amusement, riding with a bevy of gay fellows behind her, & keeping the whole party alive by wit or even practical jokes. I think the women of Virginia were more remarkable than any others for the manner in which they braved the gossip of all classes, and often with triumphant success. I have heard my Aunt Powel tell of one gay widow of the blood of the Lees—rich, beau-

## Family Friends

tiful, and witty—who was courted by all the leading beaux of her time, but never consented to make her selection among them. On one occasion she announced her intention to make her appearance *en Amazone* at the approaching races, and intimated to each of her suitors that she would give at this assembly, a sign of her preference.

She sent to each of them a coat pattern of showy cloth, requesting them to make it up after a particular fashion, and wear it in her company; but in the meantime to keep it a profound secret.

Each one felicitated himself as the happy man, the chosen suitor, and each was provoked & indignant, on the day of the races, to find himself only one of a uniform company of lovers.

But their rage came to the climax, when the brilliant widow appeared on the turf, followed by a number of negro grooms, all in the same livery! There the story, in my recollection of it, ends, and I know not if she dismissed them ignominiously, or had wit enough to make them all enjoy her rather audacious pleasantry!

I only mean to cite this lady as a proof of what women in those days dared do,—while the great families of the country still retained their prestige.

Mrs Izard's good humour, if not her good taste, would never have prompted any such escapade; but I have heard of her travelling with a large party of gentlemen, all attracted by her charms.

Her career was ended by a most painful death.

It may be interesting to my children, who maternally are of Carolina descent, to know something of a large circle of refined people from that state, who for a number of years

## Recollections

made Philadelphia their home; all of them well-acquainted with my family, & many of them distinctly recollected by myself.

They formed, indeed, a most agreeable portion of our quiet society.

There had been a number of Carolinians who came to Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War, & the successive periods of the Confederation, and the Presidency of General Washington.

Amongst my wife's ancestors, old Henry Middleton, President of Congress in 1775, his son, Arthur Middleton, in the Congress of 1776, and his brother-in-law, Edward Rutledge.

These latter seem to have been on terms of agreeable intimacy with some of my father's Quaker relations, especially my great-aunt, Mrs Logan, John Dickinson, etc.

I would refer to the translation of Chastillux' travels for a special eulogy on these gentlemen, (in Vol. I. page 307) and Mr Ralph Izard.

Whatever value the testimony of this writer may have, I believe these gentlemen were fully deserving of his praises and when introducing Mr Izard, he describes "the fire & zeal of a gentleman republican, filled with indignation at the violence and excesses he had witnessed in the English Government." He characterized the pride & impetuosity which I have always heard attributed to that gentleman, who ardently opposed the Royal Tyranny, without the slightest sympathy with Democracy.

He was resident for many years in Philadelphia, after the War, and at that time my mother was intimate with his daughters, particularly the beautiful Nancy, afterwards Mrs Deas.

## Family Friends

Mr Izard was in Europe for about ten years subsequent to 1774. He was appointed Commissioner to treat with France,—to his great disgust with the mechanical printer, Dr Franklin,—and filled other diplomatic posts.

On the adoption of the Federal Constitution, he was elected to the United States Senate from South Carolina, and made Philadelphia his home for many years. He had married the beautiful Miss Delancey of New-York & by her had a numerous family of children. At the end of his term he returned to South Carolina, & occupied his charming residence on South Bay, at the foot of Meeting Street,—afterwards burnt and replaced by the house now owned by Mr Williams Middleton, my wife's brother . . . and his patrimonial estate called The Elms, on Goose Creek, where he died, I believe about the year 1804.

When I spent part of the Spring of 1843 at Middleton Place, I drove over to the deserted settlement of Goose Creek, once a chief centre of Aristocratic Society, & found The Elms, one of the few habitable houses still left, in the possession of Dr Geddings, The Oaks, the original seat of the Middletons, so called from the magnificent avenue of live-oaks, & Crowfield, a stately ruin, then owned by Sir William Middleton, whose ancestor had abandoned it on reclaiming his English patrimony. The object of most interest, however, was the ancient Church, standing in the midst of broken & desecrated tombs, but in itself preserved, if it might be so called, in all its pristine peculiarities.

The Royal Arms richly carved, hanging insecurely above the Chancel, and the escutcheoned monuments of marble seemed ready to fall from the almost crumbling walls.

The worm-eaten Pulpit trembled as I entered it, and

## Recollections

would soon have fallen with a crash under an energetic preacher.

The Warden's Staff still marked the pew of the last in office, & fragments of Prayer-books and tattered cushions, showed that it was many a day since the worship of God had been solemnized in this building by its neighbouring Churchmen.

In the gallery, I found a Hatchment, the only one I ever met with in America,\* probably the last that ever was raised in our Country over the portal of a deceased proprietor, and in due time removed to the Parish Church, there to hang 'till it fell to pieces. This was Mr Ralph Izard's, & I have been diverted to the description of the Goose-Creek Settlement & Church, for the sake of mentioning this last instance of this ancient funeral custom in Democratic America. The Church was afterwards repaired and public worship was resumed.

Whether all these mementos of Colonial times were preserved, I never was informed.

When speaking of this to some of my old friends, they said they recollect a Hatchment over the portal of the Chief-Justice of New-Jersey under the Crown, (the Hon. Frederick Smith) who died sometime in the last century. He owned, and I believe, died at a handsome mansion on School-House Lane at the corner of Township Line.

Sometime after the death of Mr Izard, his widow and many of his family removed to Philadelphia. His fortune had been much reduced by the losses of revolutionary times, and the expenses of public life; and when it was to be divided, his Widow could no longer maintain his Carolina establishment. Subsequent misfortune compelled still greater

\*There is a hatchment in Christ Church, Philadelphia, to-day. 1928. S.C.

## Family Friends

reduction, but in those days, social position did not depend on wealth.

Colonel George Izard, the eldest son, having married the Widow Shippen, lived in the intervals of service, either at Philadelphia, or at her seat on the Neshaminy.

His eldest sister, married to Mr Gabriel Manigault, was perhaps induced by him to make her domicile in his neighbourhood.

Mr Manigault was a man of handsome fortune for that time. He purchased a place on the Delaware near Farley, called by him Clifton, (from other than local association). On it was a very large house with rooms, I remember, of palatial proportions. It had been built by a Dutch Merchant named Van Braam, and was called by him, "China Retreat." Here Mrs Manigault collected many of her family around her for several years.

I recollect going there from Bristol, at the time when the latter place was the summer resort of our fashionable world.

Mrs Manigault also purchased a winter residence, the house at the corner of Spruce & Ninth Street, built by [blank] a Frenchman, which exhibited the first instance I remember of a Mansard roof! Mr Manigault did not live long after the removal to our neighbourhood, but his Wife survived him many years, & her house was the resort of all the intellectual and refined society of our City.

She had received her education in France, & was considered a very accomplished woman. She was far from handsome, but singularly agreeable in conversation, and her taste for literature made the house the centre of all the educated men and women of her time.

And it was a time when our City seemed to have many

## Recollections

attractions for such people, especially the Diplomatic Circle, which had not ceased to consider Philadelphia the social Capital of the Country.

Mrs Manigault *tenait son salon* in the French style, & men of wit and science knew where they could always find congenial society of both sexes.

Mrs Manigault had the reputation of being what is called an *esprit fort*, and to have had no very good influence on the religious sentiments of her *entourage*, but such was the education of the day. One of her daughters married Samuel Wilcocks, another Colonel Lewis Morris of Morrisania: both left children, still living.

Two sons, Colonel Harry Manigault, a handsome soldier of the War of 1812, and Charles; both married Miss Heywards, heiresses in their day. I knew them both. Charles is still alive in Charleston, a man of considerable taste. His house had many pictures & other objects of interest, collected by him in various parts. He had travelled a great deal, & I remember he first introduced, on his return from South America, what was called the Spanish Dance, a modified German Cotillion, which was the first insinuation of the waltz into our precise society.

Mrs Manigault was followed to Philadelphia by her Mother, Mrs Izard, Mr Ralph Izard, Jr., father of Mrs McEwen, Mrs Commodore Newton, etc. Mrs Deas, and her other daughter afterwards married to Mr Joseph Allen Smith, of which marriage was born my friend Allen Smith Izard. These all, with General Izard, occupied a series of the very small houses between Ninth & Tenth Streets, on Spruce, called commonly from this settlement, Carolina Row.

In it also lived Mrs Wilcocks, daughter of Mrs Man-

## Family Friends

igault, Miss Gadsden, Mrs Frazer and her daughters, of whom the youngest is now Princess Lucien Murat, and one or two families from Georgia, the Noble Jones and the Collicks.

The lot opposite was then an open one containing the kitchen-gardens of the Pennsylvania Hospital.

Mrs Izard, *mère*, occupied the house next to the corner of Tenth, & there she had a weekly reception on Monday evenings.

The Tea-table was spread at seven o'clock, which gave place to a card-table at the head of the room, where I always found the old lady ready to give a courteous acknowledgement to my bow.

Sometimes a second party of whist was formed, or those who did not care for it, made a circle round the fire for conversation, & many of the *habitués* of Mrs Manigault's house, whom I have referred to, were there, all at their ease to go after paying their compliments to the ladies of the house, or to stay if attracted by the company.

In the other room, Mrs Izard's grandchildren & their friends were almost always in numbers sufficient for a dance. An upright piano furnished the music, & was the only piece of furniture in the apartment.

Many & many a pleasant evening have I passed there, & in recalling them I remember the most attractive girls of my youthful days.

Charlotte Deas, Ella & Meta Morris, Emma Drayton, Nancy Izard, Mary Nixon, the MacPhersons, & many others, mostly dead, or so changed as to be no longer like living persons to me.

Sometimes we had music, for the young ladies of the family were most of them accomplished in the art. At ten

## Recollections

o'clock, sponge or almond cake and wine were placed on a side-table, & at eleven, the whist-tables being broken up, the party separated. Nor did ever a more sumptuous entertainment afford more pleasure, & strangers who were taken there were equally satisfied. The refined manners which prevailed, & the graceful dignity of the beautiful old lady, gave a charm to these simple receptions, which the utmost luxury could not have enhanced. Nor would the hostess have appeared different, if she had received in a palace. Her self-composure was very remarkable. She might have felt her poverty, but never showed it. It is said that, when her daughters heard of the suicide of their Brother, Henry Izard, a favourite son who had lost everything by gambling & ruined his family also, they feared to break the news to her, but to their amazement, found she had received a letter from her son the evening before, announcing his intention. As she was about to receive her friends at her weekly reunion, she put the letter in her pocket without a word, and had been able to controul her feelings throughout the evening.

One of Mrs Izard's daughters was Mrs W. Laughton Smith. Mr Smith was Member of Congress in Washington's time. Their daughter married the Chevalier Peter Pedersen, the Danish Minister, a self-important, fussy personage, & a somewhat conspicuous member of the Diplomatic Society of Philadelphia, where he always lived; as did several of his successors, the De Billes, etc.

Another was Mrs Deas, a lady of great beauty. She was married to Mr Deas, a gentleman, as I knew him, of melancholy aspect. He had killed his Uncle in a duel, which he engaged in, to avenge an insult to his Father's honour, & never could get over the effects of it. They had a

## Family Friends

number of sons,—some in the Naval & Military service, one an Artist,—all, I believe, unhappy in their career, and one daughter, Charlotte, a very handsome girl, married to Dr Watts of New-York, and still living.

Mrs Izard's youngest daughter was married in Philadelphia to Mr I. Allen Smith, half-brother of W. L. Smith, who was old enough to be her father, & a gentleman of broken fortune. He was, I believe, a very accomplished and agreeable man, who had travelled much, collected works of Art, & seen the very best society in England & Russia, where he had great admirers among Dowagers of rank and wealth. He was generous & hospitable, and his fortune did not furnish sufficient means for his expenses. His house was at the corner of the Alley. His summer residence was at Black Point, near Long Branch, where I remember to have been in his time.

The constant repetition of his name in my Uncle's dinner list indicates his agreeable qualities as a guest, & I have heard Mr Middleton who did not lightly give praise, speak of him as a very accomplished man.

Disparity of years & straitened means made his marriage unhappy. Mrs Smith was a spoilt child & a *malade imaginaire*. She took opium & he resorted to stronger care-expellers, and they both died not long apart. After a few more years, the deaths of Mrs Manigault and her Mother broke up the social gatherings. Mrs Deas was the last survivor, but she lived with her daughter in New-York.

Nancy Izard married Dr Thomas McEwen; Ella Morris, John Butler; the latter's & Ralph Izard, Jr's younger daughters were married elsewhere so that the whole family is dispersed & gone. Mr & Mrs I Allen

## Recollections

Smith left one son, who (having been educated at West Point, & passing through various grades in the Army to that of General, resigned after the Indian Campaign in Florida, where he had greatly impaired his health,) married my wife's cousin & dearest friend, the brilliant Emma Huger, and engaged in rice planting on the Savannah River, in which he was eminently successful, but now shares the ruin of all his fellow Southerners. He took the name of Izard, that of his mother, from the inconvenience of his too common paternal appellation, though he had derived that from one of the titled Counts Palatine of Locke's Constitution, & but for the troubles & anxieties of our dreadful Civil War, would now, in mature years, have every enjoyment resulting from a cultivated taste & good education before him. Having no children he is better off than most of his unhappy friends.

I have named other Carolinians of the "Row," Miss Gadsden, the Frazers & others. I was not well acquainted with them. Mrs Frazer was the widow of an English Officer during our Revolutionary War; and lived on pension or small means first in Philadelphia, and afterwards in Bordentown. Her youngest daughter, Caroline, married Lucien Murat, the fat & handsome son of Joachim, King of Naples. He was a dissipated & worthless fellow, and having exhausted the patience & generosity of his Uncle Joseph, who of course greatly disapproved of his *mésalliance*, he soon consumed the miserable means of the Frazers, eked out by their exertions as teachers, reducing them all to great misery. He lived with toughs, rowdies & cock-fighters, running up debts wherever he could get credit, sometimes having a remittance from his Mother, when threatened with execution or jails, or borrowing from

## Family Friends

those who pitied these poor ladies more than this mushroom Prince. And so, with reckless gaiety he sustained himself, 'till the roll of the political wheel in France brought Louis Napoleon to the head of affairs, when he was called with all the other members of the old Imperial House, to share his fortune! Wealth and honours were distributed to him and his children. Great and wealthy alliances were formed for the tavern-boy's grandchildren, who if they had any pretension to honour, owed it to their virtuous & kind-hearted mother; who in her exaltation has acted with all the discretion, good sense & good heart she gained credit for in the poverty of her early life, & the humiliation of her marriage with a worthless blackguard, Prince though he called himself!

The Ancrums were descendants, by their mother, of General William Washington of South Carolina, to whom Congress voted a medal for his brilliant valour at the Battle of Cowpens. Washington Ancrum was a classmate of mine at Dr Wylie's school; a fine little gentleman I thought him. Many years afterwards I met him in South Carolina, where he was soliciting a place as an overseer.

The End









